

An abstract painting with a dark, moody palette. It features a central, textured, golden-yellow shape that resembles a flower or a piece of fabric, surrounded by dark, swirling colors like brown, blue, and green. The overall style is expressive and somewhat somber.

*Expression and Irony in the  
Songs and Symphonies*

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# MAHLER'S VOICES

Julian Johnson

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Expression and Irony in the Songs  
and Symphonies

JULIAN JOHNSON

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For John Davison



Mahlerian, musician, and mountaineer

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## Acknowledgments

As we approach the centenary of Mahler's death, scholarly interest in his music shows no sign of abating. Indeed, the research field seems unusually broad, diverse, and lively. My book has been a long time in the making, being written over a period of four years but mulled over for several years before that. One's own ideas are rarely entirely one's own—as Mahler was often frustrated to discover—but I have noted my debts to others and points of fruitful overlap wherever I have been aware of them. I have enjoyed roaming across the huge landscape of the Mahler literature and been pleased rather than despondent when I have encountered fellow travelers taking a parallel route for some of the way.

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# Contents

<i>Index to Works Discussed</i>	xi
<i>List of Music Examples</i>	xiii
<b>1 Mahler and the Musical Voice</b>	3
The Idea of Voice	3
Songs and Symphonies	17
Orchestral Voices	26
<b>2 Calling Forth a Voice</b>	41
Calling Forth	41
Horn Calls, Birdsong, and Bells	53
Calling Back	71
<b>3 Constructing a Voice</b>	93
Artifice and Invention	93
<i>Des Knaben Wunderhorn</i>	99
The Middle Symphonies	106
<b>4 Plural Voices</b>	125
Carnival Humor	125
Irony and Tone	134
Borrowed Voices	151
<b>5 Genre and Voice</b>	164
Song	167
Opera	171
Symphony	185

<b>6 Ways of Telling</b>	195
Literary Voices	195
Idyll, Dream, and Fairy Tale	207
Narrative Strategies	216
<b>7 Vienna, Modernism, and Modernity</b>	228
Critical Voices	228
Modernist Voices	237
Political Voices	247
<b>8 Performing Authenticity</b>	263
Reception and Performance	263
Authenticity and Self-Critique	269
“As If”	282
<i>Notes</i>	289
<i>Bibliography</i>	337
<i>Index</i>	349

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## Index to Works Discussed

This book is a study of Mahler's musical language and its constituent voices rather than a guide to individual works. As such, the discussion tends to range freely across all his music. On occasion, however, I have focused in more detail on a particular symphony or set of songs in order to elaborate a point. The list of page references below does not replace the comprehensive one given in the index but is provided to help readers locate the more extended treatment of individual works.

The Early Songs	41–46
<i>Das klagende Lied</i>	10–13
<i>Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen</i>	19–21
First Symphony	19–21, 48–51, 185–186
Second Symphony	65
Third Symphony	48, 51–53, 57
<i>Wunderhorn Lieder</i>	99–106, 125–127, 135–141, 168–171
<i>Kindertotenlieder</i>	71–83
<i>Rückert Lieder</i>	95–98
Fourth Symphony	106–118
Fifth Symphony	118–119
Sixth Symphony	191–192
Seventh Symphony	56–57, 118–124, 142–145
Eighth Symphony	31–32, 55–56
<i>Das Lied von der Erde</i>	13–17, 32–33, 65–69, 83–86
Ninth Symphony	86–87, 277–282
Tenth Symphony	28–29, 86–92

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# List of Music Examples

Unless otherwise stated, all examples are drawn from Mahler's music.

1.1a	First Symphony, first movement, Fig. 12	7
1.1b	Fifth Symphony, second movement, Fig. 11.15	9
1.2	<i>Das klagende Lied</i> , "Der Spielmann," Fig. 25	11
1.3	<i>Das Lied von der Erde</i> , "Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde," Fig. 40	15
1.4	Tenth Symphony, first movement, opening	29
1.5	Tenth Symphony, first movement, mm. 69–79	35
1.6	Ninth Symphony, first movement, Fig. 16	36
2.1	"Im Lenz," mm. 1–20	43
2.2	"Winterlied," mm. 49–59	45
2.3	First Symphony, first movement, Fig. 1.15	50
2.4	Fifth Symphony, third movement, Fig. 10	58
2.5	Seventh Symphony, second movement, opening	62
2.6	Third Symphony, third movement, Fig. 13.4	63
2.7	Second Symphony, fifth movement, Fig. 29	66
2.8	<i>Das Lied von der Erde</i> , "Der Abschied," Fig. 7	68
2.9	<i>Kindertotenlieder</i> , "Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n!" mm. 1–15	72
2.10	<i>Kindertotenlieder</i> , "Nun seh' ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen," Fig. 3	75
2.11	<i>Kindertotenlieder</i> , "Wenn dein Mütterlein," Fig. 1.4	80
2.12	<i>Kindertotenlieder</i> , "Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen!" Fig. 7	82
2.13	Tenth Symphony, fifth movement, mm. 30–46	88
2.14	Tenth Symphony, fifth movement, mm. 395–400	91

3.1a	<i>Rückert Lieder</i> , “Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder,” mm. 1–10	95
3.1b	<i>Rückert Lieder</i> , “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” mm. 1–11	97
3.2	Fourth Symphony, first movement, mm. 1–13	108
3.3	Fifth Symphony, fifth movement, mm. 1–27	116
3.4	Seventh Symphony, first movement, Fig. 14.10 (strings only)	121
4.1	<i>Wunderhorn Lieder</i> , “Aus! Aus!” mm. 1–22	137
4.2	<i>Wunderhorn Lieder</i> , “Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?!” mm. 33–50	139
4.3	Seventh Symphony, third movement, Fig. 118	142
4.4	First Symphony, second movement, Fig. 16.5	147
4.5	Fifth Symphony, third movement, Fig. 6	150
5.1a	Verdi, <i>Don Carlo</i> , act 4, scene 2, “O Carlo, ascolta,” Fig. C.22	175
5.1b	First Symphony, third movement, Fig. 5	176
5.2a	Verdi, <i>Otello</i> , act 1, scene 3, “Bacio, una bacio,” Fig. YY	177
5.2b	Third Symphony, sixth movement, Fig. 18	178
6.1	Sixth Symphony, third movement, Fig. 56	221
8.1a	Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2/1, second movement, mm. 1–4	275
8.1b	Fifth Symphony, fourth movement, mm. 1–11	276
8.2	Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, mm. 1–11	279

# **Mahler's Voices**



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# 1

## Mahler and the Musical Voice

No matter how much you classify and comment on music, historically, socio-logically, aesthetically, technically, there will always be a remainder, a supplement, a lapse, something non-spoken which designates itself: the voice.

—Roland Barthes, “Music, Voice, Language”

### The Idea of Voice

Mahler’s music presents itself as a kind of telling. It addresses us directly, demanding to be heard and intimating that it has disclosures to make: “Listen, I am going to play something such as you have never heard.”<sup>1</sup> It is romantic in the sense that it demands that we, as listeners, identify subjectively with its musical voice such that it comes to speak powerfully for us. At the same time, it is modern, or even postmodern, in undermining our ability to identify with it by frequent changes of musical voice and critical deconstructions of its own materials. The identity of Mahler’s musical voice becomes elusive as soon as we try to catch hold of it. Not to hear this music as the projection of an expressive voice would seem like an act of willful mishearing. But *which* expressive voice? Mahler’s music speaks with many voices, even within the same movement. Music that appears to be solemn or heart-felt one moment is suddenly ironic or brash the next. So how do we make sense of this famous plurality of musical voices, and how do we understand a music that is urgently expressive and sincere one moment, but ironic and self-conscious the next?

Edward T. Cone once asked the pertinent question, “If music is a language, then who is speaking?”<sup>2</sup> In answer, Mahler’s music seems to affirm the popular assumption that it is the composer who speaks. We, like Mahler, inherit this view from a nineteenth-century aesthetics of expression, and it is one that seems particularly apt for a music so often linked to its composer’s biography. Mahler himself subscribed to the idea and encouraged others to hear his work this way: “I have written into them everything that I have experienced and endured,” he remarked to Natalie Bauer-Lechner in 1893 of the First and Second Symphonies;<sup>3</sup> in a letter of 1896, in

relation to the Third Symphony, he wrote: "With it I conclude my 'Trilogy of Suffering'!"<sup>4</sup> The music invites us to hear it this way, as speaking with Mahler's own voice, by turns narrative and lyrical, but expressing something of the composer and of his life. The programmatic outlines to the symphonies, Mahler's annotations in the sketches, remarks recorded in letters or by his friends would all seem to reinforce such an idea, and the nature of the music, full of specific extra-musical references and representational topics, legitimates such a reading.

As a result, commentaries on Mahler's symphonic narratives have proliferated, many of which might seem congruent with our experiences of the music. But in the end, the sheer diversity of such readings is self-defeating because it underlines the ease with which the music disdains them and the extent to which it is impervious to such more-or-less plausible interpretations. My concern here is not to provide another set of readings—another guide to Mahler's symphonies—but to get under the surface of the various plots we might ascribe to this music: to explore the musical *how* and, by doing so, to get closer to the musical *what*. In Mahler's music, the *what* lies entirely in the *how*, because in Mahler the problem with speaking *as such* is precisely the content of the music. One might go further and suggest that, paradoxically, part of the specific expressive power of Mahler's music derives directly from its own anxiety about that power; his symphonic stories are carried by musical materials and forms that, at the same time, question their own capacity for any kind of representation. In a metaphorical sense, Mahler's music sings its expressive melodies while at the same time deconstructing the framework that makes them possible.

The communication of the voice itself is always prior to whatever is spoken; tone comes before word. When we hear a speaking voice it is defined, first and foremost, by its tone, rhythm, volume, contour, source—in other words, by its qualities as sound. Only secondarily, through processing these elements, is sound recognized as voice, let alone identified with a particular speaker. Only relatively late in this unfolding process of perception comes the linguistic content of the voice, the words spoken—themselves the outer edge of a vast universe of linguistic meaning. And just as the sonic aspect of the voice is perceptually prior to the words that are spoken, so it is semantically. The tone and delivery of what is said are prior to, and take priority over, the words that are said (I hear your sympathetic or impatient tone before I hear your words). If this is true of the speaking voice, how much more is it so of the musical voice, elaborated in the face of language precisely through this semantic priority of tone? We make a serious mistake in thinking that musical meaning lies in the notes, understood abstractly in terms of interval, motif, and harmony. It does, in part, just as what is said lies partly in the words. But much more, it lies in the physicality of the voice and its mode of performance. Mahler's music can hardly be grasped while this is ignored.

But the idea of a musical voice is a slippery one. In a technical sense, "voice" refers to the individual line within a polyphonic texture, a use of the term that

derives from the vocal origin of such music. In a stylistic sense, one refers to the voice of the composer to mean the identity of that composer's style as distinct from another's. One talks of a composer, like a writer, *finding* a voice in the sense of finding his or her own distinct style. On another level, one might hear a piece of music as speaking with more than one voice—a lyrical voice, for example, juxtaposed with a military voice (as in many of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs). In each case, the metaphor of voice underlines that all music, even the purely instrumental kind, refers back to a vocal origin and that even the most apparently abstract kind of music thus implies a kind of utterance.<sup>5</sup>

Mahler's music is well known for the plurality of its constituent voices. These exceed the model that Cone proposed for the idea of musical voice in *Lieder*. Cone's idea of a "double voice," made up of the musical personae differently projected by the singer and the pianist, leads to a third persona, implied by the "complete" view of the composer. But the deployment of voices in a Mahler song, let alone a symphony, erodes the sense of an implied authorial persona behind the personae of voice and accompaniment. Instead, the bewildering array of plural voices, their fragmentation in a carnivalesque assortment of different materials and kaleidoscopic orchestration, makes any sense of a unitary voice elusive. While the division of the musical voice for expressive purpose is by no means new, the self-conscious extremes of Mahler's stylistic ventriloquy are startling. His music underlines its own theatricality, its tendency to stage itself by frequent changes of scene, character, and viewpoint. Listening to an impressionist, running through a bewildering medley of different characters, one loses any sense of the artist's "own voice." The quality of that latter voice—heard later in an interview, say—thereafter remains provisional and unstable, because likely at any moment to give way to a wardrobe of impersonations.

The opposition of plural voices defines Mahler's music. At times, it addresses us intimately; the singer in the *Rückert Lieder* speaks as if there were only two of us present, and the orchestra frames and colors her internalized, lyrical disclosures, without ever expanding into the externalized space of symphonic music.<sup>6</sup> These songs anticipate parts of *Das Lied von der Erde* in conferring on the voice an *extempore* quality, as if its lines were delivered spontaneously—the musical equivalent of a few quick motions of the artist's pencil, their direct and informal quality a sign of authenticity and the absence of rhetoric or artifice.<sup>7</sup> But at other times, Mahler's symphonic music claims a universalism that transcends the concert hall. The Eighth Symphony lifts the roof not just by the sheer force of its amassed sonorities, but also by the overwhelming richness of its polyphonic voices. Bringing together the collective aspiration enshrined in Bach's cantatas and Beethoven's symphonies, Mahler's Eighth speaks, like Beethoven's Ninth, to "der ganzen Welt!"<sup>8</sup>

At times, Mahler's voice is that of one who has been enraptured. It speaks with the wide-eyed wonder of the child who wakes to find the world transfigured by snow in the night or one who recounts a dream, a trace of which still lingers (as

in “Ich ging mit Lust” or “Das Trunkene im Frühling”). At its most sentimental, it echoes the fairy-tale wonder of Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel*, but it also captures a unique quality of withdrawal into the self-sufficient fullness of an idyllic space (as in “Ich atmet’ einen linden Duft” or “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen”). At other times, Mahler’s music speaks with a biting ironic tone, as in the Scherzo of the Seventh or the Rondo Burlesque of the Ninth Symphony. Mahler’s tone moves between the deliberately naive and the sophisticated, the heartfelt and the ironic, the sublime and the banal, the sentimental and the brutal, the catatonic and the loquacious, the sacred and the profane, the collective and the solitary, the epic and the lyric, the rustic and the urban, the mythic and the modern, the grotesque and the paradisiacal.

The early Mahler songs, and most of *Das klagende Lied*, speak as if with the balladic voice of an ancient minstrel—an idea the latter thematizes in “Der Spielmann.” The default mode is a kind of third-person narration, in contrast to the lyrical first person of the later *Rückert Lieder*. The narrating voice at times becomes that of the narrated character as narrative gives way to enactment, a continuation of the balladic tradition by which one singer takes on the role of both narrator and character. In general, the *Wunderhorn* songs project a detached tone through the use of generic characters and folk-style narration in which conventional metrical schemes and diatonic formulae preclude the kind of lyrical expression so often associated with Mahler’s music. A good example is “Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen,” with its childish words and nonsense syllables, or the songs that formed the basis of later scherzo movements, “Ablösung im Sommer” and “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt.” The *moto perpetuo* character of the latter excludes the lyric mode, forcing the voice into the collective form of the round dance, without room for individual deviation.

In “Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,” however, the first of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, a dramatic dissonance between interior lyric and external situation is presented in condensed form. The external reality of the village band playing the wedding dance music stands repeatedly in stark contrast to the internal lyrical voice of the protagonist, though both are joined by their different versions of the same material. In “Die zwei blauen Augen,” the final song of the same cycle, the frozen quality of the march material appears to confine the unspoken lyrical intensity of the voice. In the *Kindertotenlieder*, the voice moves between something measured and restrained and moments of breaking out (chromatic and melismatic) that are all the more searing for being held back (*mit verhaltener Stimme*).<sup>9</sup> A voice that tries to speak in the measured tones of a ballad in “Wenn dein Mütterlein” breaks its metrical and diatonic constraints with grief (*mit ausbrechenden Schmerz*), just as the simple melodic regularity of “Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen” fails to contain the chromatically twisting sequence with which the voice ends. The expressive voice here, as so often in Mahler, derives its intensity in part by breaking out *against* the music that attempts to constrain it.

The idea of voice is highlighted at certain points in symphonic movements by the suspension or dissolution of the collective orchestral voice. In its place, Mahler allows a single, exposed voice to come to the fore, a gesture associated with a suspension of the forward progress of the normal symphonic business. At the start of the development in the first movement of the First Symphony, a return of the high A pedal in upper-string harmonics forms the background to a suspension of the tonal movement established by the preceding allegro (the exposition proper) and thus a return to the stasis of the opening. The alternation of birdsong fragments in the woodwind alludes to the idea of voice but also underlines its absence, while the cello (the instrument that had introduced the subject of the exposition) gradually reconstructs a sense of voice out of a falling fifth fragment and its upper neighbor note [Figs. 12–15] (Ex. 1.1a). A more pronounced version of this occurs in the second movement of the Fifth Symphony (Ex. 1.1b); after a collective collapse [Fig. 11], a lone cello line builds a melodic arch over a low drum roll. Marked *pianissimo*, and *klagend*, it is a foregrounded moment of construction, a fragile reconstituting of the lyrical voice.

**Example 1.1a** First Symphony, first movement, Fig. 12

**12** (♩ = wie früher die ♩) (♩ = 96)

Piccolo  
Flutes  
Oboe  
Oboe  
Clarinet in Bb  
Clarinet in Bb  
Harp I  
Violin I  
Viola  
Violoncello

**12** (♩ = wie früher die ♩) (♩ = 96)

Flag.  
Flag.  
Flag.  
gliss.  
ppp

(continued)

Example 1.1a Continued

This musical score continues from Example 1.1a. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet), strings (Violin I, Viola, Violoncello), and harp. The score is divided into two systems by a double bar line with repeat dots. The first system spans measures 1 to 4, and the second system spans measures 5 to 8. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The woodwinds play melodic lines with various articulations, including slurs and accents. The strings provide harmonic support with sustained notes and glissandos. The harp plays a sustained chord in the first system and a moving line in the second. Dynamics range from *pp* to *ppp*. The score includes a large red watermark "DropBooks" across the middle.

Fl. *pp*

Ob.

Ob.

Cl. *pp* 3

Cl.

Hns. *pp*

Hp.

Vln. I

Vla.

Vc. gliss. gliss.

Fl. *ppp*

Cl. 3

Hns. *ppp*

Hp.

Vln. I *ppp, immer Flug.*

Vla. *ppp, immer Flug.*

Vc. gliss. gliss.

**Example 1.1b** Fifth Symphony, second movement, Fig. 11.15

Langsam

Timpani

*sempre pp*

Viola

Violoncello

*am Griffbrett*

*kurz.*

*pp klagend*

*sempre pp ma espressivo*

(tr)

Timpani

Viola

Violoncello

*allmählich fließender*

(tr)

Timpani

Viola

*am Griffbrett*

*pp*

Violoncello

*sempre pp*

a 2.

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$

*pp*

*poco cresc.*

*poco cresc*

(tr)

Timpani

Viola

*etwas drängend*

Violoncello

*poco cresc.*



That voice is a central category of Mahler's music is boldly signaled in his first major work, *Das klagende Lied*, of 1880. Completed when Mahler was only twenty years of age, it failed to win the Beethoven Prize of 1881, a failure that Mahler revoked in style when he conducted the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in the work's premiere twenty years later.<sup>10</sup> *Das klagende Lied* draws on several generic traditions; defined as a cantata, its final part implies the visual component of opera. Elsewhere, it draws on the styles of fairy tale, epic poem, ballad, tone poem, and symphony, but the idea of song, and thus voice, is the central dramatic idea of the work. At its heart, is the mysterious voice heard when a wandering musician (*Der Spielmann*) plays the flute he has made from a bone found lying on the forest floor. What is heard from the flute is the *klagende Lied* of the work's title—a song of lament but also of accusation (the German verb *klagend* has both meanings). The bone from which the flute has been made is that of a knight, murdered by his elder brother, and its song now laments that death and accuses the guilty brother.<sup>11</sup>

The voice of the bone flute is heard three times in the course of the work; on each occasion it is characterized by the same music and is carefully distinguished from the rest of the piece. In the first instance this is achieved by a marked change of voice, from the epic tone of the fairy-tale ballad to the lyric tone of the song itself.<sup>12</sup> The change of voice thus occurs at moments of maximum dramatic import and interrupts the predominant narrative voice. Mahler never wrote a work that is more consistently presented in the third person, which makes the three lyrical interpolations all the more striking when they come. The change, from the third-person narration to the first-person lyric, is prepared by a series of emblematic gestures. First, the orchestra delivers an expanded version of the minstrel's strummed preparatory chords [*Der Spielmann*, Fig. 25], itself prepared by a passage of arpeggiations and the calling of two horns [Fig. 23, *sehr ruhig*] (Ex. 1.2). Mahler's use of the harp, or simply its characteristic arpeggio accompaniment patterns, draws on a well-defined topic for denoting material as "song" even when no singer is present. Second, when the mysterious voice speaks through the flute it is marked by a very particular timbral combination that runs through Mahler's output: the alto voice, doubled by, or in close counterpoint with, the cor anglais. The horn is often not far away. It is a combination that occurs at significant and related moments in Mahler's output to denote a voice of urgent and authentic expression—as in the Finale of the Second Symphony ("O glaube"), "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen," "Wenn dein Mütterlein," and "Der Abschied."

This new sonority thus intrudes from a different musical space and is quite distinct from the narrative tone of the chorus and soloists and the representational topics of the orchestra. Significantly, the voice of the bone flute constitutes the only moments of direct speech in the entire piece—the only voice that speaks in the first person, with the lyrical "I" as opposed to the narrative third person.<sup>13</sup> Paradoxically, it is the voice of the one person who is not actually present (the murdered younger brother), so that the only time the music speaks with the lyrical intensity of the first

**Example 1.2** *Das klagende Lied*, “Der Spielmann,” Fig. 25

25

Flute

Flutes

Oboes

Cor Anglais

Clarinets in B $\flat$

Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$

Bassoon

Contrabassoon

Horns in F

3 Trombones

Tuba

Harp I

Harp

25

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

(continued)

Example 1.2 Continued

26 (♩ = 69) Nicht eilen

Fl. *p*

Fl. *ppp* *p*

C. A. *mf*

Cl.

B. Cl.

Hp. *p* *pp*

A. Ach Spiel mann lie\_ be Spiel mann mein!

Vln. I *pp*

Vln. II *ppp*

Vla.

Vc. *pp*

Db.

person it is to “make present” an absent voice. As Susanne Vill has suggested, the principal dramatic character of the piece is the song of the bone flute rather than any of the theatrically “present” characters—the musician, the king, the queen or the chorus.<sup>14</sup> The song of the bone flute is thus a powerful musical example of the rhetorical figure of *prosopopeia*, which Paul de Man defines as “the fiction of an apostrophe to an absent, deceased or voiceless entity, which posits the possibility of the latter’s reply and confers upon it the power of speech. Voice assumes mouth, eye, and finally face, a chain that is manifest in the etymology of the trope’s name, *prosopon poiēn*, to confer a mask or a face (*prosopon*).”<sup>15</sup> This rhetorical strategy, he goes on, “deals with the giving and taking away of faces.” Mahler’s earliest work creates a large-scale musical structure around just this idea: music (represented by the bone flute) confers a voice and thus a presence to the otherwise absent, murdered brother.

This is a powerful symbolic statement of Mahler’s aesthetics, stated at the very outset of his compositional career. The lyrical voice in Mahler’s music appears as a kind of breaking out, or breaking through; it is delivered by the unfolding narrative progression of the rest of the music, and yet it accuses and opposes that voice. *Das klagende Lied*, taken as a whole, presents a complex reflection on the origins and power of music and the devastating effects of the unleashing of the musical voice. The narrative as a whole dramatizes the idea of calling forth a hitherto repressed voice; the innocent musician acts as a kind of psychoanalyst, making possible the cathexis of a voice that had been brutally silenced.<sup>16</sup> When that voice is sounded it has a devastating effect on the social order that it accuses. At the end of Mahler’s cantata, the castle collapses around the protagonists in a mini-version of the close of *Götterdämmerung*. At the same time, it is not hard to read *Das klagende Lied* as a prescient piece of biographical projection. “Der Spielmann,” the minstrel through whose music the voice will speak, is clearly characterized as a wandering Bohemian musician [Fig. 6],<sup>17</sup> and, wittingly or not, Mahler anticipated the reception of his own music in this, his earliest large-scale work, that makes thematic the idea of calling forth a repressed, accusatory voice with powerful social consequences. Mahler’s early cantata is thus already self-reflective and thematizes a recurrent idea in his music—the breaking out of a lyrical voice in protest against its own silencing.<sup>18</sup>

Written nearly three decades after *Das klagende Lied* (1878–1880), toward the end of Mahler’s compositional career, *Das Lied von der Erde* (1907–1908) underlines that the question of voice remained central throughout his career.<sup>19</sup> Despite their stylistic differences, the two works display a similarly hybrid sense of genre in which the relationship of vocal forms to instrumental ones is constantly rethought. Just as *Das klagende Lied* is not simply a song, but also the framing of song, its dramatic staging and performance, so too the opening song of *Das Lied von der Erde* draws attention to the song that the audience is about to hear. Both the text and music of “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde” (itself a kind

of *klagende Lied*) are reflective about the nature of the song that is about to be sung. The first two strophes of Mahler's adapted text are not the song as such, but a prelude to the song. "But do not drink yet, first I will sing you all a song!" the singer announces in the first strophe, and, in the second, he is still framing the performance by reference to the Master of the House (via his cellar) and to his own musical accompaniment (the singer's lute). Mahler thus foregrounds the idea of song and singing prior to the performance of the song. When the latter does begin, the use of the turn figure [Fig. 3.7] serves to advertise its lyrical, even operatic credentials. The busy activity of the two harps at this point constitute an orchestral expansion of the singer's lute, their arpeggiations acting as accompaniment to the "vocal" line heard in the orchestra.

The irony of the first song is that this operatic *Heldentenor*, who promises a song, subsequently sings a broken song. His delivery is aperiodic and expressionistically asymmetric (notice the fractures in the vocal line and its unsettling by rhythmic means, such as the hemiola [Figs. 8–10]). In fact, the expressionistic violence of this song is contained only by the rigidity of its strophic form; the voice (operatic, ironic, and impassioned) and the form (strophic, repetitive) are powerfully in tension with one another. Nowhere is this clearer than in the way the relatively free third strophe is cut off by the imposed return of the fourth [Fig. 39]. The only line delivered with songlike regularity is the dark refrain to each verse, "Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod" [Fig. 11]. Moreover, the tenor's voice is deliberately strained in this first movement. Mahler repeatedly asks for the upper register and confines the voice there in a painful way. Between Figs. 40 and 42, for example, the tenor must repeatedly return to a high A; his line returns twice more to the high A before a climax on a long held B-flat [Figs. 43–44] (Ex. 1.3). The horror expressed at this point (via the figure of the ape, who howls on graves in the cemetery) is immediately juxtaposed with a shift into A major, not for any genuine resolution, but to accompany the exhortation to get drunk. The ambivalence of major and minor in these closing lines serves to underline that the voice is both divided and deeply self-conscious. Mahlerian irony is given first and foremost in the contested valencies of the voice itself.

The opening of the sixth and final movement, "Der Abschied," similarly lays bare the idea of narration in Mahler's music. The singer's recitative voice—the barest kind of telling, without commentary or dramatization—is marked *In erzählendem Ton, ohne Ausdruck* (in a narrating voice, without expression). Human presence is given by the voice, but the voice is instructed to be sung without expression—a distancing, but also a kind of emotional shock, like a trauma recounted in blank tones. As the text has it later in the song, "He spoke. His voice was veiled" [Fig. 50]. Arthur Wenk has explored this idea of different voices in *Das Lied von der Erde*, drawing on Edward T. Cone's idea of musical personae, suggesting that "Der Abschied" is quite distinct in mixing voices within the same movement:

**Example 1.3** *Das Lied von der Erde*, “Das Trinklied von Jammer der Erde,” Fig. 40

**40** Allegro pesante **41**

*sempre ff* Im Mond schein auf den Grä bern

hockt ei ne wild ge spen tis sche Ge stalt.

*ff gerissen sf sf sf*

**42**

Ein Aff' ist's!

*ff ff ff*

(continued)

## Example 1.3 Continued

**43**

(ff) Hört ihr, wie sein Heu-len hin-aus-gellt in den sü-ssen

**44**

Duft - des Le bens!

The previous movements of the cycle present a number of different personae: the speaker in the opening drinking song addresses us as an audience of companions; we overhear the plaintive song of “Der Einsame in Herbst,” addressed to nature; the third and fourth movements take the form of a lyric poem and narrative, respectively, both expressed in the third person; the second drinking song, spoken in the first person, addresses no specific audience. The nature of the persona varies from one movement to the next, but remains fixed for the duration of the individual movement....The final movement, by contrast, seems to present, three personae, each with a number of different speaking voices.<sup>20</sup>

Carolyn Abbate insists, early on in her influential study of musical voice, that what she means by voices “are potentially multiple musical voices” or “different *kinds* or modes of music that inhabit a single work.”<sup>21</sup> We have seen this in *Das klagende Lied*, in the dramatic opposition between narration and enactment (Abbate’s terms). Arthur Wenk sees in “Der Abschied” the alternation of three different voices—the narrator, the waiting friend, and the departing friend. Peter Franklin says of the wayfarer of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* that he is “a standard cultural type whose musical voice is a mosaic of musical manners.”<sup>22</sup> In all these examples, a lyrical voice is thrown into greater relief by the repression it breaks through in order to be heard. As Lawrence Kramer puts it, “the music narrates in order to fail at narration, to reach the point of narrating rupture at which the subject breaks through, both dislocated and dislocating.”<sup>23</sup>

## Songs and Symphonies

Mahler’s music is marked by an unusual degree of ambivalence between the figurative idea of voice and the actual human voice itself. It is not just that his output is made up exclusively of songs and symphonies, but also that the two forms permeate each other in manifold ways, as if the relationship between the human voice and an instrumental one were being continually reexamined. Some of Mahler’s symphonies appear to have no direct relationship to vocal music, and some of his earliest songs seem to have no relationship to orchestral music, but almost all of his music reflects a constant mediation of one by the other. *Das Lied von der Erde* is both a symphony and a cycle of orchestral songs—or neither. *Das klagende Lied* and the Eighth Symphony draw on hybrid genres like the cantata or oratorio for models of a fusion of vocal and orchestral music. The early symphonies draw on Mahler’s early songs, both reworking them as orchestral songs and deriving from them purely instrumental movements.<sup>24</sup>

This persistent interweaving of vocal and instrumental genres is one of the ways in which Mahler foregrounds the idea of musical voice. Often, a vocal quality is invoked by instrumental music, as is underlined by frequent performance directions to instrumental players, such as *zart gesungen* (sweetly sung) or *gesangvoll* (songful). The Finale of the Third Symphony is marked *sehr ausdrucksvoll gesungen* (very expressively sung) and later *sehr gesangvoll* (very songful), directions that underline what the material and its tone already make clear, that this movement presents itself as the orchestral expansion of a wordless song (here, specifically a hymn).<sup>25</sup> In the Eighth Symphony, Mahler uses the performance direction *Hymnenartig* (hymnlike)<sup>26</sup> and at other times marks out instrumental passages as a Lied, or an aria, or a chorale. Such marking has to do with musical material (melody, harmony, texture, tempo, and rhythmic gait) but also with orchestration and tone.



A songlike or lyrical character is often given by the particular use of a strings-only ensemble, with or without the use of solo parts (especially a solo violin), but other prominent orchestral “singing” voices are the solo horn, oboe, and cor anglais (to a lesser extent, the flute and clarinet). If such passages imitate the human voice, they do so at a distance; in withdrawing from the actual voice, they make a rather different proposition. The instrumental voices draw on the idea of human voices, but they do not simply substitute for absent vocalists. Instead, they rework the idea of singing in the putatively more inward, abstract medium of instrumental music. This derivation from the actual singing voice is of course a key element in the process by which autonomous instrumental music is understood to speak like a voice, to impart and to tell, yet, crucially for the aesthetics of romanticism, in a manner that exceeds the particularity of words.

Vocality is thus everywhere in Mahler's music, whether or not a singer is present.<sup>27</sup> Taken as a whole, his music moves backward and forward across a liminal area located between sung text and instrumental melody, working at the border between the linguistic and the purely musical, the thetic and the semiotic. There is, then, no simple opposition in Mahler's music between vocal and instrumental music. The freely deployed presence of solo and choral voices in the symphonies, the wholesale importation of preexisting songs, the instrumental reworkings and expansions of earlier songs without voice, the songlike passages for instruments alone—all these testify to plural strategies, a constant renegotiation of the idea of voice between singing and playing, between the projection of a musical subject through the presence of an actual, flesh-and-blood singer on the stage and its construction in the discursive interaction of instrumental voices. The contrast is not absolute or fixed but, rather, part of a more complex dialectic. The individual lyrical subjectivity projected by the singer and the song is taken up in the discursive, objective process of the orchestra. But only in Mahler's most extreme negative statements (such as the closing of the Sixth Symphony) is the individual voice obliterated by the collective one and the lyrical subject silenced by the constructive process. More often, the music presents itself as a negotiation of one by the other, a process that takes place both within and between movements. The lyrical voice of the singer, understood both literally and in its purely instrumental evocation, stands over and against the activity of a more objective, constructive, autonomous kind of music.

Raymond Knapp suggests that the slow orchestral songs that form the fourth movements of the Second and Third symphonies function as a critique of the idea of a purely autonomous music represented by the scherzos that precede them.<sup>28</sup> While this is true as a structural and semantic opposition, the equation is generally more complex because, in those movements without a singer, the singing voice is absorbed into the orchestra. The tension between a lyrical voice and an objective, autonomous construction is thus internalized as a tension of the autonomous orchestral music itself. This becomes progressively more accentuated in Mahler's output, as the deployment of actual voices in the *Wunderhorn* symphonies gives way

to the purely orchestral middle symphonies (nos. 5–7), while the later works allow for both possibilities. If the prominence of vocal music in Mahler's symphonies draws attention to the wider issue of voice (and thus subjective presence), that issue is largely worked through in those purely orchestral movements that internalize the idea of voice. Such movements attempt to redeem the particularity of the voice within the universal claims of the instrumental symphony, while at the same time trying to redeem the rationality of that genre through absolute particularity.

Theodor Adorno refers to the “language-like” (*Sprachähnlichkeit*) character of Mahler's music: “Extreme proximity to language is one of the roots of Mahler's symbiosis of song and symphony, in which nothing changed even in the instrumental middle symphonies.”<sup>29</sup> The songs and symphonies, Adorno insists, are bound together by their common “speech gestures.” Mahler is far from alone in this respect, but his position within the history of symphonic music is marked by the high degree to which his symphonic language draws on the tone, gesture, and forms of vocal music. Monika Tibbe suggests that this character is first fully developed in the *Rückert Lieder* and the middle instrumental symphonies, citing the slow movements of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies as prime examples. These later songs mark the advent of a new lyrical voice in Mahler's music, quite distinct from the folksong style of his *Wunderhorn* songs with their emphasis on rhythmic and metrical schemes over melodic line as such. This makes for a strange paradox—that Mahler's folksongs are often based on instrumental forms (dances, marches, etc.), whereas the lyrical style of his orchestral music often suggests the tone, gesture, and poetic disclosure of *Lieder*.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, as Tibbe suggests, the words are relatively unimportant in those early songs derived from folksong styles: “For the folksong, the meaning and expressive content of the text is often less important than the metrical structure, in that the text is often accommodated in contravention to the intoning of the words and phrase structure.”<sup>30</sup> Since the musical character is already predominant, it is not hard to see how such songs as “Hans und Grete” are easily taken up as purely instrumental materials in the symphonies. In doing so, Tibbe suggests, they merely “return to their origin” as dance types, as with the song “Der Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt” recast as the Scherzo of the Second Symphony.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, this ambivalence of song and instrumental music points to a significant absence of the lyrical subject. In the case of the *Wunderhorn* songs, such a presence is attenuated by the collective, dancelike materials; the orchestral movements based on preexisting songs, by their very nature, underline the absence of an embodied voice.

The First Symphony, more indebted than any of the subsequent symphonies to preexisting song material, is instructive about Mahler's attitude toward song and symphony.<sup>32</sup> Although the musical material may be held in common between the two, the musical voice is necessarily altered and not just because of the greater temporal and instrumental scale of the symphony. Consider, for example, how profoundly the simple, naive material of “Ging heut morgen uber's Feld” is transformed by its

treatment in the first movement of the First Symphony. By preceding the borrowed song material with a long, atmospheric orchestral introduction, Mahler's lightweight piece of vocal *Volkstümlichkeit* now takes on a grander metaphysical claim. In the song cycle, the wanderer's carefree song begins without any introduction; in the symphony, the same material is gradually derived from the musical evocation of nature (a sunrise) with which the work begins. Innocent folk material is now invested with far greater weight and presented as the result of an organic process, formed *ab ovo* through an audible coalescence of its constituent elements. In drawing on the symphonic technique of Beethoven (though singularly un-Beethovenian in its detail) it realizes a romantic ideal: that the simple, strong material of folk culture arises as a product of nature.

The symphonic version also reworks beyond recognition the opposition of D minor and D major found in the song cycle in the opposition between the first and second songs but also as an internal opposition of the first song. In the symphony, the D minor aspect of the first *Gesellen* song ("Wenn mein Schatz, Hochzeit macht") is thus massively expanded into the slow introduction. The duality of tempo present in the song is also preserved in the introduction (the wind-band clarinets of the song now have the first fanfare figure), but whereas in the song two different tempi alternate, in the symphony they overlap. What was juxtaposed in the song at the phrase level (as opposed to an alternation of stanzas) is given simultaneously in the symphony, producing two quite distinct temporalities laid one over the other.

In the song cycle, the content of the text is not only figuratively personal, but literally so. The lyrical proposition (of the melancholy of the rejected lover giving way to the consolation of nature) is both cultural (relating to Schubert and the whole tradition of the romantic Lied) and purely biographical (Mahler's poems apparently derive from his own failed love affair). But in the symphony, the absence of words, the temporal and orchestral expansion of the material, leaves such particularity behind. What was presented as a lyrical, personal, subjective statement in the song is taken up within the public, communal, and objective form of the symphony; it is worked out not only within the more public forum of orchestral music, but also specifically within the structural demands of the symphonic tradition. When the song material proper does enter [after Fig. 4] it differs from the original Lied in being essentially polyphonic; not only expanded by contrapuntal voices, it is also "many-voiced" in the exchange of orchestral sonorities by which it is characterized. On the one hand, this turns it into a collective rather than an individual song; on the other hand, the musical subject is itself made polyphonic. This is a vital difference between the two genres: the symphony is able to project subjectivity within a shared, collective space (the figurative space of the symphony as much as the literal space of the concert hall). Part of that process involves the expansion of subjectivity through the proliferation of component voices, the expansion of the single voice of the singer into the polyphony of the orchestra.

The second movement is based on Mahler's early song "Hans und Grete" (1880), which exemplifies Monika Tibbe's point that many of Mahler's early songs are based on instrumental dances. Its evocation of a rustic dance is equally in tension with the salon setting of a Lied as with the concert hall setting of a symphony. Its orchestral treatment in the symphony is both closer to its original instrumental model and, at the same time, further away: closer in that Mahler can imply realism in using parts of his orchestra to imitate a country band; further away in that it plays with its palpable distance from its model (through the sophistication of the instrumentation and harmony). The village band, playing a rustic dance outdoors, suddenly finds itself in a concert hall now transformed into a professional orchestra and its "peasant" participants transformed into an urban bourgeois audience. The dislocation works both ways; the raw material is at odds with the orchestral treatment and also grates against the expectations of the audience, a dissonance that is not wholly to do with reception, but located in the inner tensions of Mahler's musical language, between sophisticated "art music" materials and simpler, "rustic" materials.

In the orchestral movement, the good-natured opening section drawn from the song is followed by a new, chromatic section [Fig. 8, *Wild*] that does not appear in the song. This purely symphonic extension reconfigures the construction of the simple folk voice to create an ABA effect by which the statement of this folk voice is interrupted by something more urban. The folk identity becomes a backdrop for an operetta scene in which the music becomes more psychological before recovering its folklike equilibrium [Fig. 12]. The sequence and contrast of ideas thus thematize the disjunction between them; the folk setting is neither realistic scene painting nor one-dimensional characterization. A solo voice (horn) links to the Trio in which the protagonist has a romantic encounter in what now seems a slightly tipsy social scene. The operetta character falls in love, a plot traced out in his chromatic wanderings and the slightly coquettish character of answering phrases. The narration is made clear enough, through generic devices, theme, and instrumental characterization, before the lovers are disturbed by the intrusion of the village band [Fig. 21] and the restoration of a collective voice.

The relationship between Mahler's songs and symphonies has been the subject of several studies.<sup>33</sup> My interest here is with the way in which Mahler constructs a specifically symphonic voice, even where he uses preexisting song material, and how the interaction between the two is part of a self-consciousness about the idea of the musical voice more generally. This question relates not only to how Mahler positions himself in relation to the nineteenth-century tradition of the Austro-German symphony, but also how the idea of the voice (rooted in the central vocal form of the song) is transmuted into symphonic composition, which implies voices even where they are not literally present. Mahler inherits the tradition of the symphony as discursive but, in his reworkings of actual song materials, revisits and exacerbates the tension of that form between lyrical statement and abstract working. It is not just that Mahler happens to borrow materials from his songs, or that such borrowings

imply programmatic intentions; rather, it is that the use of song material highlights an altercation of two symphonic traditions, traced from Schubert on the one hand and Beethoven on the other, and represents a key historical moment in the development of the form.

This tension was not missed by Mahler's contemporaries. Rudolf Louis, writing in 1909, warned against the combination of the two genres that, he said, results in "an awkward disproportion between the intimacy of the content and the force implied by the sounding materials employed."<sup>34</sup> Of course, we might disagree with Louis's devaluing of Mahler's work for this reason while agreeing that one of the reasons for its peculiar effect is precisely the tension between the lyrical content and the orchestral means. Paul Bekker contrasted Mahler's use of song materials with the "monumental impulse" proper to the symphony, suggesting that the two were necessarily at odds with one another.<sup>35</sup> Michael Oltmanns has recently drawn attention to this apparent opposition of the nature of lyrical forms and the nature of abstract, developmental forms proper to the symphony. Lied forms are necessarily characterized by a cantabile melodic line, small intervals suitable to the voice and avoidance of rapid passage-work, a strophic or periodic form that, in principle, is open-ended; symphonic sonata-allegro forms are typically characterized by a more broken musical surface, wide intervals, and rapid figurations, developmental and aperiodic sections, and a larger structural teleology toward formal closure. But what is striking about Mahler's music, Oltmanns concludes, is the degree of commonality between the two.<sup>36</sup>

The persistent interweaving of song and symphony is nowhere more evident than in *Das Lied von der Erde*, a work that Stephen Hefling calls "a culminating synthesis of symphony and song." At the same time, Hefling has presented clear evidence that the work "was originally conceived for performance with orchestra *or* piano, like the majority of Mahler's other songs."<sup>37</sup> In other words, the song is not absorbed into the symphony, as one reading of Mahler's middle symphonies might suggest, but remains in symbiosis with it to the end. Hermann Danuser underlines that, in the classical era, the genres of song and symphony were polar opposites—in terms of genre theory and compositional technique and history and, sociologically, in terms of social function and performance spaces.<sup>38</sup> Whereas the Lied, in the early nineteenth century, was grounded in naïveté, intimacy and unity of tone and mood, the symphony had to do with an elevated, public monumentality achieved from the synthesis of a variety of moods. The question with which Mahler's music confronts us, suggests Danuser, is how was this polarity altered in the course of that century such that the two genres could coexist in *Das Lied von der Erde*?

Danuser's answer is based on both musical and contextual concerns, the result of two separate histories converging. On the one hand, the Lied moves from the private performance space of the salon to the public concert hall, and the piano and voice combination is expanded to the orchestral Lied. On the other hand, symphonic music develops its own capacity for a songlike voice—both as a "song

without words" (as in Schubert, say) or by using lyrical material as the basis of variation movements (as in Beethoven). Bekker's category of a specifically Austrian epic-lyric symphony is apposite here (i.e., that of Schubert, Bruckner, and Mahler). Of course, the Lied itself developed from simple strophic forms to more complex, through-composed forms in keeping with the principle of continuous linear development that increasingly saturated symphonic composition. At the same time, collections of single songs were increasingly replaced by themed collections and the idea of the song cycle. The combination of orchestral Lieder and the idea of the song cycle leads, in turn, to a multimovement orchestral work that begins to resemble the outward form of the symphony. Mahler's work inherits this historical process but also turns elements of it back against itself in powerful ways. One of the most radical aspects of the later symphonies is the way in which the through-composed sonata form is undermined by a simple strophic alternation of ABAB (often characterized by major-minor modes of the tonic, as in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony).<sup>39</sup> And while the migration of the subjective and lyrical from the private space of the salon to the public and communal space of the concert hall inevitably changed the proposition of the Lied, Mahler frequently reverses this and produces a musical introversion at odds with the expanded setting. What should now be more obviously staged is made unexpectedly intimate and private, as is the case in all of Mahler's *Rückert Lieder*. Kurt von Fischer, picking up on Bekker's insistence that symphonic works have a "monumental impulse," underlines that Mahler's achievement is arrived at "above all by the dismantling of the monumental." This is heard clearly, he suggests, in the way that the opening of the Ninth Symphony "grows out of" the end of "Der Abschied," marked on its surface by lyrical fragments and formally by strophic alternation.<sup>40</sup>

No such dismantling takes place in the early symphonies, whose monumental ambitions are hardly to be denied. And it is in the early symphonies that Mahler most obviously confronted the historical tension between the claims of texted and purely instrumental music that, for the whole of the nineteenth century, were represented by Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.<sup>41</sup> Mahler's persistent revisiting of the relationship of vocal and orchestral voices in his symphonies, and the broader exploration of the idea of voice in the purely instrumental movements, have to be understood as a late, but direct response to the undiminished challenge of Beethoven's Ninth—both the symphony itself and its extensive critical reception history. Central to the latter, for Mahler as for the Viennese Secession, was undoubtedly Richard Wagner's highly influential reception of Beethoven's symphony, most importantly in *The Artwork of the Future* and in the *Beethoven* essay of 1870.<sup>42</sup> Firsthand accounts suggest that Mahler regarded the latter essay, alongside Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, as the most profound writing on music he had ever encountered.<sup>43</sup> Mahler, like Wagner, wrestled with the relationship of text and tone, of human voice and instrument, of drama and autonomous musical process—problems that, to them, Beethoven's Ninth seemed to pose rather than solve. And for both, wrestling

with this problem became a self-conscious act. In Wagner's case, this was manifested most obviously in his musical writings, an essential adjunct to his activity as a composer. For Mahler, aside from the evidence of reported conversations and correspondence, there are no theoretical statements. Instead, the works themselves reflect on these issues. Mahler's entwining of instrumental voices and the real, human voice is thus the outward sign of a constitutive tension that may be understood through several paired concepts: subjective expression and objective construction; lyrical statement and discursive working out; embodied voice and abstract reason; private and public meaning.

The ambivalent attitude toward words and music, reflected in the critical reception of Beethoven's symphony, is neatly underlined in Mahler's contribution to the 1902 Beethoven Exhibition, mounted by the Viennese Secession. It is usually reported that Mahler conducted part of the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the opening ceremony. But the excerpt he presented, the section beginning "Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?" was his own arrangement for six trombones, a format that suggests a curious disregard for the "choral" aspect of Beethoven's choral symphony.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, whatever practical reasons lay behind it, Mahler's choice of ensemble for this performance effectively reversed Beethoven's symphonic gesture: the symphonic finale in which instruments were famously surpassed by the human voice was here given without voices. The involved fugal counterpoint of this passage, arranged for six trombones, returns to absolute music, though one invested with the capacity of voice and language, albeit sublimated into pure instrumental tone, exactly as in the Finale to Mahler's own Third Symphony completed a few years earlier. Mahler's gesture is entirely in keeping with the position Wagner arrived at in the later writings, in the wake of his reading of Schopenhauer. It does not matter, Wagner insists, that we do not hear Schiller's words clearly in a performance of Beethoven's Ninth "for truly it is not the sense of the word which engages us at the entry of the human voice but the character of the human voice itself."<sup>45</sup> As Wagner points out, Schiller's ideas are subordinated to the melody, a melody that has already been given purely instrumentally before the entry of soloists and chorus. What matters, Wagner underlines, is that the voice of the chorus acts as a call to participate; its semantic force as voice thus outweighs any specific text it carries.

Nietzsche amplified the same point in his essay "On Music and Words," suggesting that in the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony, Beethoven treated voices as instruments. Consequently, "the text that is used is not understood by us in accordance with its conceptual meaning, but serves in the context of a musical work of art solely as material for vocal song and does not disturb our musically oriented feeling." In the Ninth Symphony, "the content of the words drowns unheard in the general sea of sound."<sup>46</sup> More recently, Leo Treitler has suggested that the ambivalent relationship between words and music in Beethoven's Ninth stems from the "paradoxical" nature of the work itself. The Finale, he suggests, "is the bearer of words, but it is composed as an instrumental piece, in the main. Its form is given

by an extraordinary concatenation of instrumental genres.”<sup>47</sup> Charles Rosen echoes this sentiment: “The paradigms on which Beethoven fashioned this movement are instrumental ones, and, as singers have often complained, the writing for voices is instrumental. The text is incorporated in this giant instrumental conception as a sort of citation.”<sup>48</sup>

Guido Adler located the same instinct in Mahler’s Eighth Symphony; indeed, he suggested that this was a key difference from the music of Bach, whose influence is otherwise audible in Mahler’s use of double chorus here. For Mahler, Adler underlines, “the symphonic element was pre-determinate, while the words—as important and significant as they are—are the secondary, attendant element for the composition.”<sup>49</sup> In fact, Adler went further, suggesting that “after the Fourth he continually renounced the use of words to accompany his music (for this is the true, real relationship in Mahler’s symphonies, not the use of music to accompany words).”<sup>50</sup> The instrumentally conceived use of voices in the Eighth was often picked up in critical reception and discussed under the vexed question of genre—was the Eighth a symphony, an oratorio, a cantata, or a semistaged opera?<sup>51</sup> Constantin Floros, for one, suggests that Part 2 includes elements of recitative, arioso, chorale, hymn, and Lied.<sup>52</sup> If Richard Specht’s reporting of Mahler’s words is reliable, then Mahler himself claimed that the Eighth did indeed represent a new relationship of voices and instruments, one in which voices came to be treated *as* instruments: “So far I have only ever used words and the human voice as a signifying, abbreviating device in setting a mood: in order that something which, in purely symphonic terms, could only have been expressed with immense breadth, could be said with the succinct determination that indeed only words afford. Here however the voice is at the same time an instrument; the whole first movement is kept strictly in symphonic form, and yet it is sung throughout.”<sup>53</sup>

But Mahler’s interrogation of the relationship of texted vocal music and wholly instrumental music reflects a deeper engagement with Beethoven’s Ninth which exceeds the observation that the finales of Mahler’s first four symphonies all revisit Beethoven’s famous Finale. What links Beethoven’s movement to Mahler’s music is less its affirmative choral conclusion than its self-questioning beginning, one of the most striking instances of linguistic self-consciousness in the history of music and arguably the most influential. The opening of Beethoven’s Finale foregrounds a profound self-consciousness about music as a way of telling. Mahler’s debt to this work has less to do with symphonic form or with the use of singers and much more to do with the manner in which Beethoven problematized the whole question of the musical voice itself. To be sure, this was not confined to the symphony; the late piano sonatas and quartets make clear that the search for a more adequate voice exceeds any simple opposition between instrumental and vocal music.

Mahler’s music as a whole has its roots in the self-conscious anxiety that underlies Beethoven’s “O Freunde, nicht diese Töne.” Beethoven’s reviews of earlier movements constitute a series of false beginnings, rhetorical devices that frame the



adequate or more authentic disclosure of the voice, though that “voice” is not literally singing, but the melody heard first in the strings that the voices subsequently take up. But the line in the cellos and basses *stands in* for a singing voice, drawing very deliberately on the style and delivery of operatic recitative with its interruptions, its declamatory and melodic styles. This voice cannot be heard as the arrival of an authentic “composer’s voice” because the music it interrupts is precisely the composer’s music of the earlier movements: this is self-critique, the search for a more adequate voice, arriving through a discursive, critical process, at the famous D major melody. For composers after Beethoven, the affirmative nature of the Finale did not lay to rest the question that it had irrevocably posed. The opening of this movement calls into question the nature of symphonic music as discourse, its capacity to speak at all. This question haunted the subsequent history of the nineteenth-century symphony but is nowhere more explicitly exorcised than in Mahler.

## Orchestral Voices

The difference between song and symphony is grounded in the difference between, on the one hand, a concrete, individual human presence, manifested through a single voice and a single melodic line (the singer) and, on the other hand, a plural collection of instrumental voices distanced from the immediacy of the human voice in a more abstract and disparate polyphony (the orchestra). Irrespective of their musical content, song and symphony thus make different propositions. The symphony draws heavily on the idea of song but subjects it to structural and orchestral expansion, as is clear in the way the classical form moves between simple periodic melodies and their more discursive elaboration and development. The tension between these elements—embodied melody and abstract development—comes to a head in Mahler’s symphonies. His deployment of actual singing voices and his orchestral imitations of the sound and gestures of the singing voice are juxtaposed with complex polyphonic textures delivered in a kaleidoscopic variety of orchestral colors that dissolve any sense of individual voice. Over and again, a lyrical and songlike tone is deployed in opposition to the abstract instrumental schema of dance forms, march forms, and contrapuntal textures where constructive logic appears to dominate over immediacy of expression. In this, Mahler brings to the fore a founding contradiction of the symphonic genre: the orchestral expansion of lyrical material is both an expansion of the subject carried by that material and, at the same time, an erosion of the subject’s particularity.

Symphonic music thus embodies the negotiation between the individual subject and the collective whole. In the late eighteenth century the symphony took up the individual lyrical voice and rendered it social. The price for this process of objectification was a loss of the subject’s particularity, a price that is challenged repeatedly

in the history of the nineteenth-century symphony. An attempt to counterbalance this loss of the subject can be heard in the increasing subjective force of the romantic symphony, especially in the music of Mahler's most significant forerunners in this respect, Berlioz and Tchaikovsky. Mahler's treatment of the orchestra and the voice needs to be read in this context. His earliest work, *Das klagende Lied*, balanced uneasily between solo and chorus, singers and instrumentalists, signaled with astonishing prescience that the social collective embodied by symphonic music is accused by the return of a repressed lyric voice. The social edifice, embodying historical, rational, collective power, comes crashing down in the face of the immediacy of the lyric. But rather than abandoning orchestral music after *Das klagende Lied*, Mahler went on to complete nearly eleven symphonic works, six of them without the presence of human voices. Mahler never relinquished the symphonic project, with its promise of transcendence, but his symphonies consistently and repeatedly deploy the lyrical voice as accusing (*klagend*). The fate of the modern subject, that its expansion through rational structures is also a fragmentation and a loss of particularity, is not simply embodied or expressed in Mahler, as if music were mere reportage; it is brutally analyzed and, at the same time, opposed by a vision that protests against such brutality. This is the source of the sentimental in Mahler. In the modern era, the individual lyrical voice necessarily sounds nostalgic (as in Mahler) or alienated (as in Webern).

Mahler's achievement is, in part, that he exacerbated to breaking point this symphonic legacy of the nineteenth century. His juxtaposition of an orchestrally expanded collective with the deconstruction of the lyrical individual by fragmentation and dissolution is heard, first and foremost, in the orchestra. This tension is already manifest in the paradox of polyphony itself. Mahler's polyphony runs from the choric expansion of a hymnlike voice in the Finale of the Third Symphony to the radical dissociation of elements in the Rondo Burlesque of the Ninth. It is this tension between expansion and fragmentation that lies behind Mahler's self-conscious turn to a more contrapuntal style after 1901, a stylistic shift that necessitated a new approach to orchestration, as Mahler himself later remarked in relation to the Fifth Symphony.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps it is not coincidental that the new style was first marked in the *Kindertotenlieder*, songs in which the lyrical subject is in a state of shock (*erschütternd*), attempting to hold itself together in the face of impossible trauma. The bare counterpoint of the opening song is an attempt at integration but, in its very bareness, presents a refusal of the line to expand. The voice becomes a thread in the texture on a par with the instrumental voices.<sup>55</sup>

The bare lines act as a critique of an outworn "songfulness," yet the latter is preserved as an element of reminiscence that is, by turn, both sentimental and utopian in its alienating effect. If the more "modern" means of bare counterpoint marks an attempt to preserve the authenticity of expression through a critique of an expressive style no longer adequate to the task, that older expressive style, now distanced, remains remarkably potent as the representation of something lost. Adorno

pointed to something similar when he said that “counterpoint for Mahler was the self-alienated form of music that imposed itself on the subject.”<sup>56</sup> This is marked by the way that attempts to recover a lyrical voice persist in Mahler’s late music and are juxtaposed with more “objective” and collective polyphony, as the lyrical first movement of the Ninth Symphony, for example, is followed by its contrapuntal second and third movements. But this self-critique of symphonic lyricism is also manifest in Mahler’s orchestration. It is heard in the way that his orchestral singing is itself divided into polyphonic voices, as the Finale of the Ninth Symphony and the first movement of the Tenth make clear. But, conversely, it is also heard in the way that the constituent instrumental lines of such polyphony are allowed to break out of the collective texture and, paradoxically, become individuated again; some of the passages of bare counterpoint in the first movements of the Sixth and Ninth symphonies point to such an idea. James L. Zychowicz touches on this element in the Fourth Symphony, which, he suggests, “requires more intimate, ensemble-like playing” because of Mahler’s increasing use of solo instrumental lines, “thus anticipating the chamber-music-like sonorities of his late works.”<sup>57</sup>

On the one hand, then, counterpoint constitutes an expansion of the single voice, a process in which the voice is taken up into a larger, polyphonic, and discursive whole. On the other hand, Mahler anticipates the Second Viennese School in the capacity of his orchestration to dissociate voices one from another, as if the fragmentation of the orchestration wanted to oppose the contrapuntal will to integration. Even the integrated voice implied by a single line may be deconstructed by a process of orchestral fragmentation, rendering a single (vocal) identity into several, often dissociated, instrumental ones.<sup>58</sup> It is this that marks Mahler’s orchestration as modern: not the superficial quality of coloristic disjunctions, but the contribution these make to an underlying disruption of the voice. Neville Cardus suggested that Mahler drew from Berlioz his high degree of individualization of the musical drama, arguing that “Mahler was the first symphonic composer to make nearly every instrument a protagonist speaking in its own voice.”<sup>59</sup> This is true, both in the historical debt to Berlioz and also to the degree of individuation within Mahler’s orchestra, but it might be pushed further: the orchestral protagonists, speaking with their “own voices,” are not necessarily congruent with the melodic or contrapuntal voice of which they are part. The kaleidoscopic tendency of Mahler’s orchestration, at its most extreme in the scherzos, has a tendency to work against the material it embodies and thus to deconstruct the integrity of the musical voice.

These two processes, the orchestral expansion of the voice and its simultaneous fragmentation, are bound together in each of Mahler’s works, rather than defining features of a late or early style. Consider, for example, the opening of the Tenth Symphony, which presents one of the most remarkable of Mahler’s instrumental voices (Ex. 1.4). To begin a symphony with a long, exaggeratedly slow, vagrantly chromatic line scored only for the viola section was unprecedented in Mahler’s time and has rarely been imitated since.<sup>60</sup> Its vocalty is underlined in several ways. Above all, the

**Example 1.4** Tenth Symphony, first movement, opening

**Andante**

Vla. 1

Vla. 5

Vla. 10

tone of the violas is one of the closest to the human singing voice; these opening bars outline the range and tone of an alto voice, always a sign in Mahler of sincerity and authenticity. This “vocal” line is aperiodic and appears improvisatory in its avoidance of the neat symmetrical phrasing and tonal patterning of a conventional melody. It draws attention to itself not as specific melodic or musical content, but primarily as *voice*. Its wide arch of an elongated rise and fall (in register but thereby also in timbral intensity) is a paradigmatic gesture of vocal expression, as is its subsidence back to silence. While not a song, it is regular in pulse and heavily accented (note the closing measures, 11–13) as though to emphasize key words of an absent text.<sup>61</sup>

In evoking the singing voice, the orchestra implies an absent human presence. By rendering that voice through instrumental tones, it draws it into an acoustic and collective space that allows the individual voice to be taken up and expanded, in terms of tone color, register, dynamic, and articulation as well as through orchestral polyphony. The orchestra thus magnifies and expands as well as prismatically dividing the constitutive unity of a single voice. At the opening of the Tenth Symphony, an individual voice is presented in fragile form before being absorbed into the rich choric tone of the string section as a whole (m. 16). This is a prime example of Mahler’s “Adagio voice,” in which the close spacing of a divided string section makes for a particularly rich and homogenous sonority.<sup>62</sup> As the monody of the single voice is superseded by polyphony, so too are the physical limits of the (human) voice, outlined by the viola section, exceeded in its orchestral expansion. The 1st Violin line stretches the registral envelope to the extreme of the soprano voice; the 2nd Violin expansion (mm. 24ff.) stretches it beyond.<sup>63</sup>

Exactly the same pattern (of a solo line absorbed into, and expanded by, a larger collective voice) can be seen in the opening out of Mahler's other lyrical slow movements for orchestra alone: the Finale of the Third Symphony, the Andante of the Fourth, the Adagietto of the Fifth, the Andante of the Sixth, and both the opening Andante and Adagio Finale of the Ninth. In each case, the melodic material is first presented within the range of the human singing voice and by a combination of instruments (almost exclusively strings) that imitate the tone of the human voice. The slow tempo of the music is reinforced by the stability of Mahler's orchestral choir, so the sonority changes only very gradually and only at the junctures marked by phrase or verse endings. The Adagio Finale to the Third is typical of the way in which a hymnlike melody is expanded by the addition of new contrapuntal lines and a prominent countermelody, the migration of the melody to a higher octave and the increase in dynamic intensity. Withholding the 1st Violins, as here in the Third, is a favorite technique of Mahler's but can be appreciated only if one remembers that he would have expected the 1st and 2nd Violins to be seated on either side of the stage.<sup>64</sup> The structural shape of this Finale, its approach to moments of climax and abatement, are shaped more by orchestral sonority and tone than anything else. Greater intensity is achieved not so much by greater complexity of harmony, rhythm, or texture, but primarily through the control of tone.

The opening of the Andante of the Fourth Symphony is marked by Mahler's performance direction *sehr gesangvoll*. From its "songful" opening the music expands through texture and countermelody without rising above its quiet dynamic. Since the harmony remains purely diatonic and contained by simple pedals, the sense of expansion is achieved entirely through the division of the string orchestra into distinct registral layers. The effect of spatial expansion, rather than temporal progression, is key to the sense of self-containment by which this movement constructs itself as an idyll. Such self-containment, manifest in the registral fullness of this largely static harmony, is more often found as a point of arrival in Mahler, but here it is given at the start of the movement. This use of an orchestral expansion as a structural device is powerfully underlined in the late works, as is demonstrated by the Finale of the Ninth Symphony and the opening movement of the Tenth. In both these movements, the cyclic returns of the opening material, though heard in variant forms, are essentially undeveloped. Structurally, the constant return makes for an intensity whose only outlet is through progressive orchestral expansion of the same material.

Constantin Floros suggests that the Andante of the Sixth Symphony, the Adagietto of the Fifth, and the second *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh, are all "songs without words"<sup>65</sup> and thus imply an orchestrally expanded voice. The Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony has received much attention from this point of view. Over the harp's accompaniment, the strings present a lyrical voice that is expanded not only through counterpoint, but also through a prismatic splitting of the line between different instrumental voices. The string orchestra functions not as a choir, therefore, but as

the expressive amplification of a single voice. That this movement has its origins in the idea of song is supported by the evidence that Mahler conceived it originally as a love song for Alma in the early stages of their relationship—quite literally, then, as a song without words.<sup>66</sup> But as a symphonic movement it necessarily exceeds the voice. It provides a good example of Mahler's tendency to use the orchestra to evoke the sound of the human voice but as the starting point for a process of orchestral expansion beyond the limits of the voice.

While Mahler's Adagio movements often expand a single voice into choric polyphony, elsewhere the orchestra turns into an amplified version of a particular ensemble or sonority—the little serenade band of the second *Nachtmusik* in the Seventh Symphony or the Bohemian street musicians of the third movement of the First, for example. For most of the Eighth Symphony the orchestra serves as a vastly expanded cathedral organ. The organ is the first sound heard at the start of the symphony, and its distinctive tone is prominent (as far as possible in an orchestral tutti) at the end of both Part 1 and Part 2. Figuratively, it sets the tone for the entire work in that its religious sentiments are marked through clear borrowings from various religious choral traditions, from chorales and motets to cantatas, oratorios, and mass settings. But the organ sets the tone in a literal way, too, in that its “voice” (and with it, the genres it denotes) is expanded by much of the orchestral writing in the symphony (neatly reversing the tendency of nineteenth-century organs to imitate the orchestra). This is most obvious in the closing sections of both movements, where the organ's massive sustained chords are simply doubled by the orchestral instruments.

What is striking about Part 1, as Mahler himself claimed, is the high degree to which it is voice-led. The orchestra's role is essentially to amplify the voices; the sung lines are almost always doubled in the orchestra, a strategy that simultaneously amplifies the voices and “vocalizes” the orchestral parts. In other words, Mahler creates a fusion of vocal and instrumental tone and gesture. There is no question of accompaniment here. That the orchestral lines lend themselves to vocalization so easily (or, conversely, that Mahler's vocal writing lends itself so well to symphonic treatment) underscores the essentially vocal nature of his music as a whole. Even the soloists, more often than not, are doubled in the orchestra, and moments of genuine *a capella* singing are rare (and rather startling when they do occur, as at Fig. 10.5). The only other role played by the orchestra is that of commentary (e.g., Fig. 12.3 or Fig. 19.5, where the solo violin plays *ohne Rücksicht auf das Tempo*). There are some orchestral interludes [Figs. 17–19 and 23–30], but they are relatively short-lived.

Part 2 is strikingly different in its treatment of the orchestra. First, there is a long orchestral exposition prior to the vocal one, creating a kind of double exposition. Second, there is far less of the complex counterpoint here. Much of the texture in Part 2 is essentially homophonic and often defined by very simple melodic materials, so here the orchestra often does take on an accompanying role. The music of both the *Pater ecstaticus* and *Pater profundus* draws on the lyrical, chromatic intensity

of Mahler's expressive counterpoint—an asymmetric, impetuous, and impassioned music whose tangled contrapuntal texture embodies a constant tugging between voice and orchestra. But after this, the majority of Part 2 consists of simple homophonic, often startlingly static, diatonic music. The various choirs of angels have metrically regular music and often sing in unison [e.g., Figs. 56 or 63.5]. The vision of heaven here is defined by musical simplicity, whereas the act of human invocation is a complex gothic polyphony (presence is simple and self-contained; absence is fraught because necessarily incomplete). The result is that, for much of Part 2, Mahler's vast orchestra is used very sparingly, both in terms of the actual number of players used at any one time, but also in its constant deployment of simple held chords and arpeggiated accompaniment patterns. At times, Mahler's orchestration resembles the registration shifts of the organ, a charge more often leveled at Bruckner (see, for example, how a scoring of four flutes [Fig. 21] gives way to reed instruments [Fig. 22.1] and then to brass four bars later). The prominent use of long upper pedal notes also implies the sustaining properties of the organ (e.g., from the opening of Part 2 to Fig. 8, or Figs. 24–32). This progressive simplification reaches its goal with the appearance of the *Mater gloriosa* [Fig. 106]. As earlier in the last movement of the Fourth Symphony, the worldly tone of the symphony orchestra is left behind for a radically different sound world characterized by the simplicity of a single melodic line in the violins accompanied by the “celestial” arpeggiations of harps and harmonium. As so often in Mahler, the effect is profoundly ambivalent; the transparent simplicity of the sonority gains a recharged expressive potential through its context (because it is the result of the long symphonic process that precedes it). At the same time, it constitutes a theatrical importing into the symphony of the hackneyed sounds of sentimental French Catholic church music.<sup>67</sup>

While the Eighth Symphony employs the orchestra as a vast cathedral organ, *Das Lied von der Erde* uses the orchestra as the lute to which its singer refers. The orchestra is, as it were, tuned differently in this piece, its customary registration altered and its “weighting” adjusted. The orchestra of the Austro-German symphonic tradition is made to speak here with a quite different tone and accent, a shift comparable to making a Steinway sound like a Japanese *koto*. Mahler achieves this in a number of ways. Most obviously it is signaled by the introduction of unfamiliar instruments into the orchestra (such as the guitar and mandolin) and by the prominent use of more familiar ones (such as the glockenspiel and triangle). But it also has to do with the careful and unusual weighting of instrumental combinations and the specific registers in which instruments are used. The cellos, for example, often play high in their register during the first movement, contributing to the taut, rather strained tone.

The orchestral “lute” of *Das Lied von der Erde* by which the singer accompanies himself draws closely on a device Mahler employed often, nowhere more prominently than in *Das klagende Lied*, by which appearances of closed-song forms within otherwise narrative or epic forms are clearly framed by the harp. The use

of the actual harp, or simply the arpeggiated accompaniment patterns habitually associated with it, is thus a well-defined topic in Mahler for denoting material as “song” even when no singer is present. In discussing the “Gesang” theme in the first movement of the Second Symphony, Carolyn Abbate refers to the harp’s “orphyic force...as if the instrument is reclaiming its pagan meaning as lyre and accompaniment to epic singing.”<sup>68</sup> It is a function that recurs at other significantly “vocal” moments—in the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony or the related Rückert song, “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen.” Amid the great eruption at the end of the third movement of the Fourth Symphony, the harp’s arpeggiations act as a prelude to the entry of the soprano voice at the start of the Finale. In the first movement of the Seventh Symphony [5 mm. before Fig. 40], it is the same gesture that marks out this passage as rhetorically lyrical, in contradistinction to the principal march material.<sup>69</sup>

But against all these examples of expanding the voice through an integrated ensemble stands Mahler’s use of the orchestra to create a quite opposite effect. While orchestral expansion renders the individual voice into a richer, polyphonic dimension, an opposing process of orchestral fragmentation breaks down the sense of voice through radical multiplicity. Instead of the boundaries of identity being expanded, identity is progressively dissolved within the fragmentary tones of dissociated instrumental parts. Mahler’s technique for splitting the voice in this way is to use the orchestra as a kind of acoustic prism, breaking down a melodic line into component fragments defined by different instrumental colors. It is a process that becomes prominent from the Fourth Symphony onward and is most prevalent in the next three symphonies. The heterogeneity of Mahler’s material is heard first in terms of his disparate orchestral voices characterized by rapid changes, unlikely combinations, and strained registral placings. This is particularly noticeable in the fragmentation of the musical texture arising from structural processes of dissolution and abatement at section endings.<sup>70</sup>

Monika Tibbe has shown this to be a customary strategy of Mahler’s scherzo movements. Although the sectional repetitions on which the scherzo form is based should guarantee stability, Mahler subjects this to a “process of dissolution” (*Auflösungsprozeß*). Part of this, Tibbe suggests, is the continuous variation of orchestration and the addition of accompaniment and countervoices.<sup>71</sup> As an example, she cites the case of the Scherzo of the Third Symphony, where the presentation of the original song material is at first “extraordinarily concrete” in terms of instrumentation, with individual voices very clearly distinguished one from another. In the reprise, however, the contours are no longer clear and the instrumentation produces a “tendency towards dissolution.”<sup>72</sup> The song material, dissolved through the multiplicity of orchestral voices, thus creates a powerful structural and semantic effect that, giving the lie to the apparently affirmative character of the coda, imparts to the end of the movement a sense of “the triumph of demolition.”<sup>73</sup> Something similar is found in the Scherzo of the Fourth Symphony. The different voices are



here deliberately misaligned to create an unintegrated collection of disparate accompaniment figures. The violin solo, when it arrives, is vertically misaligned with its accompaniment but is already dissociated by the timbral effect of its *scordatura* tuning and the performance direction that it should be played *Wie eine Fidel*.

In the late works, a particular kind of fragmentation is often achieved by deploying instrumental lines at the limits of their upper registers while leaving them unsupported by any middle voices in the orchestral texture. This blatant disregard for the principles of “good” orchestration becomes a means of searing expressive intensity and, as such, a hallmark of musical expressionism. Nowhere is this more acute than in the bare contrapuntal passages of the first and last movements of the Tenth Symphony, to be sure an unfinished work, but one whose incompleteness highlights a tone of the late style that completion may have softened only slightly. The progressive reduction of supporting lines is a structural and expressive strategy of the first movement of the Tenth Symphony in which the rich texture of the original Adagio material is stripped away, leaving only two bare lines of dissonant counterpoint prior to the eruption of the A flat minor episode (mm. 178ff.).

The later symphonies provide several examples of a lone, unsupported upper voice, straining at the limit of its register, typically at section endings where it highlights the sense of frustrated straining toward closure. An exposed upper violin line is often reinforced, in the orchestra of Mahler's later works, by the cutting power of the piccolo (e.g., mm. 47–48 in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony). In the first movement of the Tenth Symphony (mm. 73ff.) the harmonic “stuckness” of the music produces audible strain in the 1st Violin line, culminating on a triple *forte* high D<sup>4</sup> (Ex. 1.5). The reprise of the opening viola line (mm. 104–11) takes the viola section an octave higher than the original opening bars (up to D<sup>3</sup>, *forte*). This strained quality of the high upper voice, unsupported by any middle, is often further agitated by the interweaving of two upper parts, most obviously, the two violin sections. Consider the effect of the two violin lines in mm. 24–27 of the opening adagio of the Tenth Symphony. This can be used to produce an effect of sonic richness and fecundity (as it does in the Andante of the Sixth and at moments in the Adagio of the Tenth, such as at mm. 141 or 178), but it has the opposite effect when used high in the register and as an unsupported two-part counterpoint.

Another way of increasing the intensity of the voice is by the heterophonic fragmentation of a line between different instrumental parts. In Ex. 1.6, drawn from the first movement of the Ninth Symphony, the 1st Violin line is reinforced by partial fragments of itself played in the 2nd Violin, oboe, and flute. These are rhythmically offset from one another to create a rhythmic and timbral agitation of the melodic line. Writ large, this is Mahler's means of constructing orchestral tutti sections in which impassioned intensity is conveyed by means of busy musical surfaces (see, for example, the agitated *Bewegter* sections of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony). These rarely deploy more than four real contrapuntal voices, but a sense of internal complexity and disruption is created by a scoring that puts the orchestra

**Example 1.5** Tenth Symphony, first movement, mm. 69–79

**Adagio**

**System 1 (Measures 69–72):**

- Violin I: *sempre ff*
- Violin II: *ff*
- Viola: *ff*
- Violoncello: *ff*
- Double Bass: *ff*

**System 2 (Measures 73–75):**

- Vln. I: *sempre ff* (Measure 75: *fff*)
- Vln. II: *sempre ff*
- Vla.: *sempre ff*
- Vc.: *ff* (Measure 75: *sf*)
- Dh: *ff* (Measure 75: *ffsf*)

**System 3 (Measures 76–79):**

- Measures 76–77: Repeat sign.
- Measure 78: **Rit.**
- Vln. I: *p* (Measure 78)
- Vln. II: *p* (Measure 78)
- Vla.: *dim.* (Measure 78), *p* (Measure 79)
- Vc.: *sf* (Measure 78), *ffsf* (Measure 79)
- Dh: *ffsf* (Measure 79)

**Example 1.6** Ninth Symphony, first movement, Fig. 16

**16**

356 zu 4

Flutes *f* *ff* *ff*

Oboes zu 3 *ff*

Violin I *ff* *ff* *ff*

Violin II *f*

Viola

359

Fl. *ff* *ff*

Ob.

Vln. I *f* *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

at odds with itself. While Mahler studied Bach to improve his counterpoint, his orchestration tends frequently toward a divided contrapuntal consciousness that is the inverse of Bach's integration.

This internal derangement of the orchestral voice finds violent form in the Rondo Burlesque of the Ninth Symphony in which the entire orchestra appears to struggle with itself. It shares with Mahler's March forms the apparent ambition to integrate its own heteronomous and centrifugal materials, but the rapidity with which orchestral voices change results in something ungraspable. This movement, like the first movement of the Eighth Symphony, is essentially choric in the scoring of its contrapuntal elements, with each woodwind section often playing in unison *à 4*, a long way indeed from the chamber music style of the Fourth Symphony or the *Rückert Lieder*.<sup>74</sup> But the effect is quite different in the Ninth Symphony: the bareness of the counterpoint draws attention to itself, as when the fugal subject in the horns (*à 4*) is answered only by the countersubject in cellos and basses (see mm. 311ff.).

The Rondo Burlesque exhibits a quality of exaggeration in orchestral tone that was always latent in Mahler but becomes marked from the Fifth Symphony onward. In the Sixth, particularly, the tone is overdetermined. As with a speaking voice, such overdetermination, tending toward stridency, suggests that content alone (what is spoken) is no longer adequately communicative. Early on in his career, when opportunities for performance of his works were hard to come by, Mahler himself drew attention to this aspect of his music in a comment to Natalie Bauer-Lechner: "How much I lose through not being able to try out my things in live performance!... For example, when scoring I perhaps over-emphasize certain things for fear that they might become lost, or sound too weak."<sup>75</sup> Yet the overemphasis so evident in Mahler's music can hardly be ascribed to this alone, any more than the overemphasis of color in the work of Van Gogh or Matisse arises from some technical failing.<sup>76</sup> The orchestration and the musical gesture are one, and in Mahler often produce a definitive *exaggeration* of the musical voice, an intensification of the voice where direct expression is somehow blocked or frustrated. This sense of resistance, of having to work against the grain, is a product of the orchestral "voicing" of his music, as Mahler himself underlined: "If I want to produce a soft, sustained sound, I don't give it to an instrument which produces it easily, but rather to one which can get it only with effort and under pressure—often only by forcing itself and exceeding its natural range. I often make the basses and bassoon squeak on the highest notes, while my flute huffs and puffs down below."<sup>77</sup>

The tone of Mahler's orchestra, so central to what is said by his music, is defined by such definitive deviations. While Mahler's music can present itself as the most intimate kind of chamber music, at other times it has a strident, out-of-doors quality that offended his early critics. The horn trills at the end of the first movement of the First Symphony or the anarchic wind music of the first

movement of the Third are good examples. One of his most distinctive markings for wind instruments is the instruction to play “bells up,” that is, with the end of the instrument pointing directly up and forward rather than down (horn players raise the bells of their instruments, though inevitably they still face sideways). The sound achieved in this way is not just louder, it also has a distinctive rawness. The figure that opens the Third Symphony, given by eight horns in unison, is a prime example. Later on in the first movement [Fig. 45], the horns and trombones are marked *roh!* a term that literally means raw but which also suggests something rough, unwrought, unhewn, crude, uncouth, even brutal.<sup>78</sup> In the third movement of the same symphony [Fig. 23] Mahler uses the instruction *Grob!* to mean much the same thing (coarse, gross, or crude). In complete contrast, the final page of the Finale has the marking “Not with raw power. Satiated, noble tone” [Fig. 32] to characterize this moment of religious fulfillment. The entire symphony, one could say, is summed up in its journey from one orchestral tone to another.

We know that Mahler went to great lengths to obtain exactly the right tone. This is born out by the revisions he made to his own scores after their initial performances; his willingness to reorchestrate canonic masterworks in order to ensure utmost clarity of structural articulation;<sup>79</sup> his efforts to secure exactly the right singers, instruments, and players for his works; and the careful performance directions that he added to his scores. In addition to directions relating to tone color, Mahler was equally particular about modes of attack and articulation. In the first edition of the score to the Third Symphony, he wrote the following performance direction at Fig. 32 of the first movement: “This passage must be played by the strings with the greatest power, so that the individual strings, as a result of the violent vibration, almost come into contact with the fingerboard. The Viennese call this ‘schöppern.’ A similar effect applies to the horns.”<sup>80</sup> The horns play a rather agitated fanfare figure here while the strings have tremolandi, triple *forte*. The effect that Mahler asks for is very particular. Not only is the string sound dirtier and less pure, but it also makes for a powerful visual effect because of the intense effort each player is required to make. This piece of orchestral theater is part of the musical material. Nor is such a direction an isolated example. Mahler deploys various forms of hitting or striking in his music, condensing visible violence into audible instrumental gestures. The famous hammer blows in the Finale of the Sixth Symphony, or the drum hits that link the fourth and fifth movements of the Tenth, are only the most extreme examples of a much larger set of gestures.<sup>81</sup> Mahler’s use of exaggerated pizzicato, the instruction *gerissen* (“torn off” or “snapped”) at phrase endings,<sup>82</sup> the stopped *sforzandi* in horns, the use of the whip and switch all mark an outer limit of orchestral tone where the physical aspect of instrumental gestures becomes exposed as just that—physical violence.<sup>83</sup> In its most extreme form, the purely rhythmic “hit” stands against the idea of musical speech, as a gesture by which the musical voice is silenced.

Something similar is achieved by Mahler's occasional use of an orchestral force that is intended to be overpowering. At the end of the Finale of the Fifth Symphony [Fig. 34.11] the trombones are marked *alles über tönend* (i.e., drown everything out!). Elsewhere, in moments of the first movements of the Second and Third Symphonies or the Finale of the Sixth, Mahler intends the power of the orchestra to be simply overwhelming in its intensity. Precedent for this can be found in Berlioz and his use of forces that derive from outdoor spaces, not from inside the concert hall, as in the military band sonority of the *Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*. Mahler's use of the brass in the Second Symphony suggests a debt to the astonishing sonorities of the "Tuba mirum" of Berlioz's Requiem, the four brass bands and sixteen timpani of which anticipate Mahler in terms of both their spatial deployment for the representation of an eschatological force and also their breaking of the boundaries of normal musical sonority.

"There is no musical category in the work of Gustav Mahler so neglected in the history of its effect and, at the same time, so significant for its reception, than instrumentation."<sup>84</sup> Thomas Schäfer's claim points to a strange myopia in our more recent approaches to Mahler's music, given how central to Mahler's critics was the category of orchestration. Hostile critics generally singled out orchestration as evidence of the essential emptiness of Mahler's music. Robert Hirschfeld was characteristically withering in this regard: "The weakness in invention is brilliantly scored, the inability in form always interestingly orchestrated."<sup>85</sup> The American critic Arthur Farwell went even further, asking, "Why should one go into detail concerning the orchestral mask, when there is nothing behind it?"<sup>86</sup> It was not that critics considered Mahler's orchestration to be weak; on the contrary, they unanimously acknowledged its technical assurance and modernity. But the deployment of a highly coloristic and kaleidoscopic orchestral style was evidence, for conservative critics of the fin de siècle, of a lack of real musical substance—by which they meant thematic work and tonal grammar, and the teleological musical forms derived from them. Hirschfeld thus objected to the "play of colors instead of a play of constructive forms" because he thought this made music empty, trivial, and hollow.<sup>87</sup> The violence of the opposition betokens a repression that Karen Painter has underlined in showing how critics devalued timbre by feminizing it. Orchestration was thus merely an "orchestral changing of clothes and bejeweling," an application to musical substance of superficial and "cosmetic powers" such that "the sensuality of timbre" was seen by conservative critics as an unequivocal sign of decadence.<sup>88</sup>

The opposition was deep-seated. It was, above all, an opposition to concentrating on "momentary effect and detail at the expense of a unified whole, on sensual surface rather than logical structure, and on intense emotion and sensation instead of spiritual transcendence."<sup>89</sup> Painter quotes Robert Hirschfeld attacking the use of sonority in Mahler and Debussy (a link that would have horrified them both): "Mahler and Debussy are concerned with analysis, with the dissolution of that which both exists and is determinate in sonority, color and scent."<sup>90</sup> As ever, Hirschfeld's

observations are trenchant, though his evaluation may be opposite to our own. Mahler's orchestration is indeed analytical, in the sense that Webern's orchestration of Bach's *Ricercare* is analytical (in breaking down the constituent motifs of melodic lines), and thus in producing a fragmentation of the musical surface and undermining the solid substance of thematic material, which, as Hirschfeld instinctively knew, had been the vehicle of an integrated and unified musical subjectivity for over a hundred years. This is why conservative critics instinctually resisted the new orchestration—it contributed to the modernist challenge to an older model of the integrated subject.

Mahler's supporters responded then, as now, by countering this charge with analyses that demonstrate the persistent, detailed, and structural uses of thematic work as evidence that both Mahler and his music derive from good Austro-German stock. But, without denying the importance of this, one might accord Mahler's critics an important level of insight. For all the composer's own words about thematic material over orchestration (*"What one writes always seemed to me more important than what it is scored for"*<sup>91</sup>), and for all the analyses that account for his musical forms as if they were written not for the orchestra but confined to the abstract reduction of two staves, Mahler's music exemplifies a key aspect of musical modernism in the weight that is carried by sonority. That tone is everything in Mahler is obvious enough to anyone at a live performance, whether it be through the overwhelming power of the Mahlerian *tutti*, the attenuated lines of bare polyphony, the unsupported high violins, the doubling of the single line, or the analytical deconstruction of a scherzo. That *how* Mahler's music speaks is inseparable from *what* it says is nowhere clearer than in relation to his orchestration. This is foregrounded by those moments in his music where the orchestration does not "serve" the thematic material (as vehicle or coloration) but actively reworks and even contradicts it. Hirschfeld was sensitive to this when, discussing the First Symphony, he suggested that "the parodistic element of the instrumentation...is revealed in the disproportion between the ideas and their orchestral clothing."<sup>92</sup> Listening to Mahler's orchestra reminds us that the physical immediacy of tone and gesture are semantically prior to the abstract grammatical logic of harmony, motif, and phrase. The voice in Mahler—in spite of Mahler—is defined, first and foremost, by its tone.<sup>93</sup>

## 2

# Calling Forth a Voice

### Calling Forth

*Sag' an, du Träumer am lichten Tag  
was willst du heut' mit dem Bangen?  
Du wandelst so stumm durch Lenz und Hag,  
Als wärest du von Blindheit befangen.*



Say, you dreamer, on this bright day,  
What do you want with cares?  
You wander so silently through spring and grove  
As though you were struck by blindness.

The bright, busy opening of Mahler's earliest surviving song, "Im Lenz" (1880), is a summons: a demand for speech. On one level, the composer's own text is clearly self-addressed. The call to the dreamer within, apparently blind to the outer world, is successful; a song appears, as silent and introverted wandering is turned into productive and vocal poesis. This calling elicits a response from what was hitherto silent; with a complete change of musical character (m. 14), the voice of the caller gives way to the voice of the dreamer himself (Ex. 2.1). The daylight world of the questioner is now displaced by a darker and more troubled world; the opening F major is followed without transition by A flat major and a slower, quieter piano accompaniment texture of tremolando octaves overlaid with distant horn calls. That the same singer delivers the second stanza in no way obscures the change of musical voice but, rather, underlines that this music speaks with more than one voice. The difference of the dreamer's voice underlines its distance to the everyday but also the problematic nature of poetic expression.

*Ich bin nicht blind und sehe doch nicht  
mir ist nicht dunkel, und ist nicht licht.*



*Könnst' lachen und könnte weinen,  
Doch sagen könnst' ich es keinem.*



I am not blind and yet see not.  
It is neither dark nor light for me.  
I cannot laugh and I cannot weep,  
And yet I can say nothing.

Biographers tell us that these early songs were dedicated to Josephine Poisl, daughter of a postman in Mahler's childhood hometown of Iglau. Mahler's divided voice, caught between an urge to express and a silent refusal of the outer world, would thus appear to stem, on this occasion, from the painful ending of a student's love affair. This was always fertile ground for the young romantic poet or composer, and Mahler is hardly alone; the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (1883–1885) apparently originate from a similar source.<sup>1</sup> But the song sets out a larger compositional tension that was to inform all of Mahler's music, from the very earliest songs through to *Das Lied von der Erde* and the last symphonies, an aesthetic self-consciousness about musical voice that far exceeds the particularity of any specific biographical origins. What Mahler expressed in this early song, perhaps with more self-awareness than its naive tone suggests, is the romantic schism between the ineffability of experience and its expression in language. The song ends with a statement of this division in both its poetry and music. In response to renewed calls to cast off his woes and be happy in the brightness of the day, the dreamer expresses both his desire for such a release and its impossibility. For him, the spring so ardently desired is already long distant. The final stanza of the dreamer's voice begins in C major but ends by moving toward C sharp minor, closing on its dominant chord but enharmonically altered so as to imply the key of D flat.<sup>2</sup> The song is thus not only harmonically unresolved, but unresolved in a key very distant from that in which it began.

The dominant ending suggests a debt to Schumann's "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai."<sup>3</sup> Mahler's song, like Schumann's, is the first song of a cycle about a doomed love, which uses the beauty of spring as the ironic foil for the misery of the protagonist and signals the disparity between the two worlds by failing to resolve in the normal way.<sup>4</sup> But what Mahler really takes from Schumann is the signaling of a division in the voice, a surface manifestation of a deeper fracture. Authentic expression is necessarily distant; it requires calling forth to be heard at all. When it is, it remains broken and alienated from the everyday world. This expressive rupture in the voice is frequently expressed through the romantic topic of physical distance. In "Winterlied," intended to form part of the same cycle as "Im Lenz," the expressive voice that is called forth sounds "across mountain and valley" and with such intensity that it penetrates into the cozy hut from the cold mountain world outside: "Do you hear me, beloved?" asks the disembodied voice. Significantly, this distant voice

**Example 2.1** “Im Lenz,” mm. 1–20

**Sehr lebhaft**

**1**

Sag'

**2**

an, du Träu an lich - ten Tag, was

**4**

willst du heut' - mit dem Ban gen? Du

*mf*

*mezza voce*

**6**

wan - delst so stumm durh Lenz und Hag, als

*pp* *8va*

(continued)

# Example 2.1 Continued

8

wärest du von Blind - heit be - fan - gen.

8va

mf

f

f p

accel.

11

13

Noch einmal so langsam

Ich bin nicht blind und se - he doch nicht,

rit.

sf

16

mir ist nicht dun - kel, und ist - nicht licht.

sf

appears in the form of a clearly shaped song, framed by a narrator's introduction, once again marked by a complete change of character (m. 30). This song-within-a-song thus highlights the different status of the expressive voice that is called forth (Ex. 2.2). In its efforts to find adequate expression it comes close to breaking; its final lines approach an operatic intensity (rising to a high B flat for "ewig verschwunden!" mm. 57–58) before giving way to an extended piano postlude in the style of Schumann. The summoned voice, having broken in the face of an impossible act of expression, thus gives way to a purely instrumental close in which release is found by a stilling of the expressive voice in an essentially unrelated, utopian F major.

**Example 2.2** "Winterlied," mm. 49–59

49 Ernst, doch ruhig

O se - li - ge Stun - den!

52 Ach nur - ein Blick

55 war un - - ser Glück.

The musical score for 'Winterlied' (Example 2.2) spans measures 49 to 59. It is written for voice and piano in 9/8 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). The vocal line is in a soprano or alto register. The piano accompaniment features a strong, rhythmic bass line in the left hand, often with chords, and a more melodic line in the right hand. The lyrics are in German. The score is divided into three systems, each with a measure number (49, 52, 55) at the beginning. The first system (measures 49-51) includes the lyrics 'Ernst, doch ruhig' and 'O se - li - ge Stun - den!'. The second system (measures 52-54) includes 'Ach nur - ein Blick'. The third system (measures 55-59) includes 'war un - - ser Glück.' The piano part has dynamics of *pp* (pianissimo) at measure 49, *f* (forte) at measure 52, and *fp* (fortissimo) at measure 55. The score ends with a 'continued' note.

(continued)

**Example 2.2** *Continued*

57

E - wig - verschun - den!

*f* *ff*

Physical distance is thus a metaphor of psychological distance; the mystery of nature from which the poetic voice must be summoned is, equally, the mystery of the unconscious. The composition of “Im Lenz” and “Winterlied” overlaps chronologically (and shares specific materials) with *Das klagende Lied* (1880), which, as we have seen, makes thematic the idea of calling forth a voice in an extended dramatic manner. It is unclear whether the songs borrow from the cantata or vice versa; either way, the borrowing serves to underline the same preoccupation. The dreamer in “Im Lenz” underlines the difficulty of poetic speech to exactly the same music that introduces the song of the bone flute in the cantata (“Im Lenz,” m. 14; *Der Spielmann*, Fig. 21). As in the songs, the voice that is summoned in *Der Spielmann* is called out of nature. The human world (C minor march topic) gives way to the archetypal call of a pair of “natural” horns (an echo of the same is heard in “Im Lenz,” m. 14; a more extended example occurs in the slow introduction to the First Symphony). The minstrel is placed definitively in the forest by a passage of “forest murmur” music showing some kinship to Wagner’s *Siegfried*. An entire series of framing gestures prepares the dramatic central point, the sounding of the voice through the bone flute. Theatrical fanfares and drum rolls lead to a long pedal over which a chorus at first calls forth then subsides to a pause [Figs. 16–17], which functions as a preparatory threshold. More fanfares underline the calling forth of the voice that follows. When the voice itself speaks [alto solo, Fig. 21], its mysterious calling forth from nature is underlined once again by the pair of horns and a high arpeggiation of harp and violins [Fig. 23] to which the later Mahler would no doubt have added a celesta. The birdsong of the forest murmurs returns here, elaborating its ornamental figures within the tonal containment of the static F major tonality (cf. the end of “Winterlied”).

Mahler’s own comments on the essentially mysterious provenance of the musical voice, and thus on his own creative process, are at once part of the mythology of the romantic artist and an account of the self-alienation inherent in creative work. His own understanding of the creative process might be seen as a version of Schopenhauer’s idea that “the composer reveals the innermost nature of the world, and

expresses the profoundest wisdom in a language that his reasoning faculty does not understand, just as a magnetic somnambulist gives information about things of which she has no conception when she is awake. Therefore in the composer, more than in any other artist, the man is entirely separate and distinct from the artist.”<sup>5</sup> A much-quoted passage about his Third Symphony from Mahler’s letter to Anna Mildenberg of July 18, 1896, draws out both of these aspects: “My symphony will be something the world has never heard before! In it Nature herself acquires a voice and tells secrets so profound that they are perhaps glimpsed only in dreams! I assure you, there are passages where I myself sometimes get an eerie feeling; it seems as though it were not I who composed them.”<sup>6</sup> Mahler’s insistence that it was as if his symphony were the work of another might well be read as evidence that the process of creation takes on a life of its own, speaking in a voice that the conscious, constructive mind fails to recognize as its own. Arnold Schoenberg, as much influenced by Schopenhauer as was Mahler, said of the latter’s Ninth Symphony: “In it the author hardly speaks as an individual any more. It almost seems as though this work must have a concealed author who used Mahler merely as his spokesman, as his mouthpiece.”<sup>7</sup> The strangeness of the work to the composer himself is underlined by Natalie Bauer-Lechner, reporting of Mahler that “he confronts his own works as if they were completely foreign to him.” The words she ascribes directly to Mahler—“I see it more and more: one does not compose, one is composed”<sup>8</sup>—are strikingly similar to Heidegger’s later formulation: “Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.”<sup>9</sup> The same idea was elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin in a form that has direct bearing on Mahler’s work: “The author does not speak in a given language (from which he distances himself to a greater or lesser degree), but he speaks, as it were, through language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates.”<sup>10</sup>

The romantic idea that music not only speaks, but also gives voice to something greater than the music was manifest in various attempts to underline that instrumental music was metaphysically articulate. Explicit in the programmatic claims surrounding music, it was latent also in the tendency of large-scale, discursive forms to forge a pattern of triumph through struggle with adversity, a journey of the heroic subject underpinned by tonal and motivic unities. But it was also manifest in the way that music framed its own voice as essentially mysterious, profound, and revelatory. Schumann appended the title “Der Dichter spricht” not to a song, but to a short piece for piano solo. The poet speaks through the voice of instrumental music, and through the poet speaks something greater still. Music’s framing of its own voice is thus inscribed in works themselves. What is distinctive in Mahler’s case, and which Schoenberg’s comment about the Ninth underlines, is the degree to which this estrangement of the composer from his own work is mediated within the work itself. One of the most important ways in which this is achieved, and one that is foregrounded time and again in Mahler’s music, is the way in which music

presents its own voice as being called forth, gradually and mysteriously, from an unknown source.

The fourth movement of the Third Symphony, a setting of the Midnight Song from Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, is derived from this metaphysical proposition of an aesthetic and prophetic voice called forth from nature. Mahler marks the movement *Misterioso* and the entry of the alto voice *mit geheimnisvollen Ausdruck* (with mysterious expression). The voice emerges from fragments that gradually coalesce in a static, nonlinear musical space. The alto voice is called forth from the depths of nature like Erda in act 1 of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. At first, it is summoned by the bell-like tolling of single chords that stand out against the emptiness of the musical background. The beginning of the vocal line is floated in without a strong sense of meter, hardly disturbing the gentle rocking motion of the simple ostinato. A mournful call is heard in the oboe, marked *wie ein Naturlaut* and identified in the autograph full score as the cry of the night-bird ("Der Vogel der Nacht"). Any sense of progression is withheld until Fig. 5, when a recognizable lyrical expression is voiced in the exchange of violins and horn. Taken as a whole, the movement presents astonishingly minimal material, its constrained character contrasting with the quality of profusion of the preceding movements. Only gradually does it progress, from its minimal opening toward a more expansive statement and a kind of lyrical fulfillment [Figs. 9–11].<sup>11</sup>

This calling forth of a voice from mysterious and inarticulate depths is more than an expressive topic of Mahler's music; it is a defining structural process. All of Mahler's symphonies are shaped by this idea, but it is significant that it was already foregrounded at the beginning of his First. From its opening bars, the First Symphony signals that the calling forth of the musical voice is a structural principle on which the music will be founded. On one level, the beginning of this work recalls Bruckner's habit of opening symphonies with a shimmer of strings as a blank but luminous background upon which to project a principal melodic voice. But the involved process by which Mahler calls forth the material of his allegro is of a different order; it does not appear as a complete, divinely given melodic whole (as at the start of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony) but is derived in a protracted, piecemeal way from the emptiness of the opening bars. The opening of the First Symphony is thus constituted by the emergence of a vocal presence from its foregrounded absence; it dwells equally on the voice that is called forth as the silence of nature from which it is summoned. Mahler's direction *wie ein Naturlaut* always denotes something extra-neous to human culture and language, and thus a kind of absence.

The emptiness of a raw, amorphous nature is given by the bare octaves played as string harmonics with which the work starts. Theodor Adorno makes much of Mahler's comment to Bauer-Lechner that the use of harmonics was a revision he made after the premiere of the work in Budapest, where the opening had "sounded far too substantial for the shimmering and glimmering of the air that I had in mind."<sup>12</sup> The effect of something beyond the human sphere is achieved, however, not by timbre

alone, but also by the spatial effect created by the relative absence of events and any well-defined sense of meter by which a temporal grid for human experience might be established. The events that do emerge from this background appear to take place in quite different time frames; the dissociation of the slow falling-fourth figure and the fanfare passages is achieved not simply by the use of the trumpets offstage, but also by their apparent disregard for the tempo of the onstage orchestra. The cuckoo motif in the clarinet is marked as such by Mahler, to be played “without regard for the main tempo.” It would appear that the first of the fanfare passages, heard pianissimo in the low register of the clarinets (mm. 9–12), was originally scored for horns; Mahler’s instruction on the manuscript was “Horns played loudly at such a distance—if possible, played outside the hall—that they may be heard only *ppp* by the public.” He repeated the same instruction for the trumpet fanfare (mm. 22–26) that, in the final version, remains offstage but nevertheless *ppp*.<sup>13</sup>

The sense of spatial distance is thus achieved by several factors—harmony, timbre, dynamics, register, tempo, orchestration, and spatial placement. The overlapping of different calling figures blurs the distance between the human world (fanfares) and that of nature (birdcalls), an effect increased by replacing the realism of horns in mm. 9–12 with clarinets (the same instrument that later will provide the cuckoo’s two-note fanfare). The horn melody [Fig. 1.15] that emerges from this tapestry is itself a kind of voice; Mahler marks it *sehr weich gesungen* (sung very softly) (Ex. 2.3). As a paradigmatic pastoral voice, the horn mediates between the world of nature and the world of man: it is presented here as part of the calling forth of the lyrical, human voice, but it is also an anticipation of the arrival of the vocal presence to which the entire introduction points. That arrival is delivered by the gradual coalescence of elements previously lacking: the sustained A-pedal comes to function as a *dominant* pedal and thus as the agent of movement and arrival; the rising chromatic figure in the basses and cellos inculcates both rhythmic and harmonic movement; the falling-fourth figure in the horns is heard at increasingly smaller temporal distances, as if coming physically closer.

The D major allegro [Fig. 4.5] marks the arrival of the symphonic protagonist, the wandering lad of the second song of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. The voice that is called forth is thus, quite literally, lyrical. But the symphonic expansion of the song material results in a quite different proposition to that of the song cycle itself. In the symphony, the D major theme of “Ging heut’ morgen” is derived organically from the slow introduction—a well-established symphonic tradition, here overlaid with clear programmatic associations. If this were opera (and, in a way, it could have been)<sup>14</sup> one might expect a similar piece of scene painting prior to the entry of the main character. But the symphonic process by which that arrival is achieved binds the two together far more deliberately. What is marked by the turn to D major and the onset of the allegro tempo is a presence thus far lacking in the slow introduction (in D minor but with “anticipatory” moments of the major). This presence is literally called forth from the absence defined by the introduction:



**Example 2.3** First Symphony, first movement, Fig. 1.15

**Piu mosso**

(Clar. ohne Rücksicht auf das Tempo I.)  
Der Ruf eines Kuckucks nachzuahmen.

**Tempo I.**

28      **Tempo I. (Langsam)**

Clarinets in B♭

Horns in F

Trumpets  
in F

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

mit Dämpfer

*pp sehr weich gesungen molto espress.*

*sff sf> sf> sf>*

(continued)

## Example 2.3 Continued

33

2 Piu mosso

Hns.

Tpts.

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vc.

Vc.

Db.

Db.

Db.

*pp espress.*

*In weiter Entfernung*

*Schnell*

*Flag.*

*sempre pp*

*Flag.*

*sempre pp*

it embodies an individual statement, a defined form, crystallized out of the amorphous condition in which the movement begins. Its vocal quality is underwritten by the formal aspects of its origins in song, hence the clear metrical identity and periodic shaping of melody and harmony. This proposition of a clear, lyrical voice contrasts with the fragments of the preceding introduction from which it is nevertheless derived. It is, moreover, a full voice, expanded almost at once by counterpoint, where the preceding section was empty.

This idea of derivation, of calling the voice out of nature, is presented in most sustained form in the Third Symphony, the fourth movement of which has already been considered. Whereas at the start of the First Symphony the gentle calling of the horns merges the sounds of nature (birdcalls) with those of the human world (distant fanfares), the conventionality of this representational gesture is exploded by the opening of the Third Symphony. Its opening call (Mahler called it a *Weckruf*), delivered by eight horns in unison, exceeds conventional orchestral tone as a

*Naturlaut* and implies a physical space well beyond the concert hall. This calling forth is on a massive scale; it summons a voice out of silence, a presence out of emptiness, a form out of formlessness. Even as the process unfolds, it does so against the inertia of an amorphousness that threatens to reclaim each attempt to form a definitive statement (witness the progress and collapse back to emptiness approaching Fig. 10). The “emphatic” (*entschieden*) character of the horn theme acts as a foil to the amorphous space into which it disappears. The subterranean chorale [Fig. 1] subsumes the opening call to march, which is explicitly contradicted by the formless stasis of a sustained pedal sonority given in the timpani and the pedal notes of horns and contra-bassoon, punctuated only by the repeated chords of four trombones and bass tuba (the same funereal cortège that ends the Sixth Symphony). A will to form is exercised in the introduction but only to fall repeatedly back to nothingness and to re-begin once more from Fig. 10. Mahler’s claim that in this movement “the whole of nature finds a voice” is worth taking seriously.<sup>15</sup>

The orchestral tone of this movement is key to its content; the prominent trombone solo is the most obvious example of an enhanced use of the brass. This is not just a matter of “rude” force in the context of the concert hall, but also of the cumulative effect of the whole movement as it progresses from inarticulate cries (such as the clarinets and oboes [Fig. 2.4] or the cellos and basses [Fig. 3]) to the horn call that begins at Fig. 4.9—in other words, the gradual emergence of a voice out of brute, inarticulate gestures. What defines the opening gesture is less the quality of the call itself and more the quality of the silence into which it echoes. It is the absence of any answer to the call that serves to underline the absence of expressive voice here. There is no rejoinder to the grand opening gesture; only as the music constructs its slow progress is a response gradually formed. The opening call does not just require space in which to sound across, it also *creates* that sense of space. It is hard not to recollect Mahler’s comment to Bruno Walter, as he arrived at Mahler’s summer lodgings on the Attersee, that the vast cliffs of the Hölleugebirge behind them had been “used up” in this movement. If there is any substantial link between the actual landscape and Mahler’s music here, it has to do with this construction of space by means of acoustic resonance.<sup>16</sup>

The voice of the solo trombone progresses from stark, monosyllabic utterances to genuine lyricism; indeed, its evolution toward an expressive voice embodies that of the movement and the symphony as a whole. Its journey toward something approaching the human voice is marked by a number of signs, one of which, as Reinhold Kubik points out, is the historically antiquated use of the *messa di voce*, the small dynamic swell on a single note as a gesture of expressive emphasis. Elsewhere in Mahler it is associated with clearly songlike instrumental passages, such as the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony, but it is used here to mark the highest point of the trombone’s journey toward lyrical expression. Mahler underlines this arrival by use of his definitive marker of vocal lyricism—the turn figure [see Figs. 60–62].<sup>17</sup>

The manner in which the voice unfolds in the Third Symphony is instructive; indeed, the evolutionary program Mahler accords to the symphony, with its

emphasis on telling and disclosure, might just as well have been couched in terms of the coming into presence of the expressive voice and, thus, of the expressive subject. Only in the fourth movement, with its setting of Nietzsche's "Mitternacht," does the lyrical, human voice arrive fully, and its framing of the voice, by means of exaggerated absence and withholding, functions as a kind of microcosm of the entire symphony. In the First Symphony, Mahler perhaps does no more than foreground a process of self-generation that was paradigmatic for the symphony since Haydn. But whereas the classical symphony constructed its thematic voice deliberately, and in daylight, by a visible act of constructive will, the romantic symphony presented a trope of nature in which the symphonic voice emerged as a mysterious voice of nature rather than as the result of rational process.

The idea was underlined by Richard Wagner in the highly influential *Beethoven* essay of 1870. Wagner's terms recall a central idea in Hegel and highlight the importance of the idea of calling for a theory of the self-conscious subject: "the will calls; and in the counter-call recognizes itself again." He illustrates his remark with concrete examples drawn from his own experience. "Thus the yearning youth understands the alluring song of the woodbirds; thus the sensitive man speaks the lament of animals and the wind,"<sup>18</sup> Wagner continues, not only calling to mind his own *Siegfried*, but also anticipating the protagonist of the first movement of Mahler's First Symphony or the third movement of the Third Symphony, which Mahler titled "What the creatures of the forest tell me." Wagner's most elaborate metaphor for this calling back and forth is given by his recollection of two shepherds calling across a high alpine valley. His description seems curiously evocative of both the resounding brass calls in the opening section of Mahler's Third Symphony and the echoing horn calls that twice interrupt the progress of the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony: "It was full daylight when I heard from one side of a high Alpine meadow the shrill, jubilant cry of a shepherd calling across the wide valley; through the massive silence another high-spirited shepherd soon answered him: these cries were joined by an echo from the towering cliff faces; one against the other they joyfully re-echoed in the solemn silent valley."<sup>19</sup>

## Horn Calls, Birdsong, and Bells

Perhaps more than the music of any other composer, Mahler's resounds with gestures of calling—horn calls, fanfares, the calls of birds and animals, the summoning of bells. Their calling is often heard across a distance (either "as if from a distance" or literally removed, as with the offstage trumpets at the start of the First Symphony or the offstage horns in the Finale of the Second). Such calls construct a complex layering of semiotic activity: their literal quality, drawn from the realities of urban and rural life, seems to suggest an almost theatrical narration.

At the same time, the manner in which their constituent materials are taken up in the otherwise abstract musical process of the symphony seems to distance them from such programmatic directness. Drawn into a purely aesthetic world, such calls move between the real and the aesthetic, the direct and the symbolic. They enrich the purely aesthetic with elements of the real at the same time as they question the nature of the aesthetic.

Despite their huge variety, such calls may be grouped into three main categories, the associations of which correspond roughly to the realms of nature, humankind, and God—birdcalls, fanfares, and bells. That said, Mahler's use of these types often overlaps, since his interest is repeatedly with the threshold between one space and another. While the fanfare seems unequivocally human in its origin and purpose, and birdsong similarly "of nature," in Mahler's music birdsong is often addressed to a human protagonist and fanfares sound in the animal world. Bells may denote the human world of religion, but Mahler's use of cowbells, like the call of horns, evokes a pastoral space in which the boundary between the realms of man and nature is blurred. That these realms are often evoked together denotes a music that is concerned precisely with the relationship of one to the other. Frequently their shared function is to construct a kind of musical threshold, a spatial field, a suspension of linear motion that prepares the arrival of a new voice and thus a new musical identity—as in the *Grosse Appell*<sup>20</sup> in the Finale of the Second Symphony [Figs. 3 and 29].

Mahler's use of fanfares draws on their original functions as a summoning to muster and a call to arms, but also as announcement and the signaling of imminent arrival.<sup>21</sup> By definition, the fanfare implies physical distance; it acts as a nonverbal communication that can be heard over a wider distance than could be achieved by the human voice. Its communication is necessarily perfunctory and immediate rather than expressive or discursive, but it is this very one-dimensionality of meaning that lends itself so well to the contextual play of Mahler's music. His fanfare figures are both rhetorical, local devices for framing structural arrivals and the outward sign of narrative and programmatic concerns. Their use in the *Wunderhorn* Lieder demonstrates Mahler's early transformation of an element of realism into a sign of psychological distance. In "Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz" the recruit is fatally disturbed by the alluring call of his rural *Heimat*. The opening fanfare figure, marked *wie eine Schalmey*, may perhaps be literally heard from the distance across the border that separates him from home, or it may be merely a figment of his imagination, a potent symbol of his homesickness; either way, the intensity with which the call stirs an emotional response founded in absence and distance causes him to desert, a transgression for which he will be hanged.<sup>22</sup>

Elsewhere, the fanfare announces moments of arrival, as is often the case in a symphonic context, where structural climaxes are marked by fanfares as something sought or awaited. The fanfares in the fifth and final stanza of "Um Mitternacht" (m. 75) mark the arrival that the rest of the song prepares, the fourfold absence thus far being revoked by the presence of the climactic fifth stanza. Structural moments

in purely instrumental works, marked by similar fanfare preparation, often function in a parallel way as moments of fulfillment or completion. Recapitulations are habitually marked by such means (e.g., the first and last movements of the First Symphony), as are key moments of structural and expressive breakthrough (such as the B major passage in the first movement of the Seventh Symphony, marked by threshold fanfares at Figs. 31–33 and 37–39).

A crucial aspect of the fanfare is that it constitutes a *collective* call. This is particularly significant given the centrifugal tendency of Mahler's music, the proliferating heterogeneity of its materials, which threaten to spiral beyond the bounds of symphonic form and unity. The *Appell* is thus a call to (symphonic) order. It is particularly marked in the rondo finales of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, which underline the conventionality of the fanfare gesture by deliberate brashness. In the later works, this can be problematic; the opening of the Ninth Symphony assembles itself from a collection of fragments, including a distant horn call. It stands as a cipher for a more distant symphonic confidence, pointing to the absence of the strongthetic statement with which a symphony traditionally began in the eighteenth century. Its broken, fragmentary call gives way, a few bars later, to the languorous "Leb'wohl" melody.<sup>23</sup> To be sure, its fanfare rhythm plays an important role in the movement, now associated with a falling chromatic contour, but it functions as a negative call; opposed to the D major song material, it stands as a denial of the lyrical voice, ending sections rather than initiating them.

The use of this distant fanfare fragment, recollected in the opening bars of the Ninth, stands in marked contrast to how fanfare figures are deployed throughout Part 1 of the Eighth Symphony. The Latin hymn "Veni, creator spiritus" is a clear enough statement of the calling forth of the inspirational spirit, the generative force of the Word, and Mahler's setting is shaped around a set of clear, fanfarelike figures. The opening of Part 1 is a long way from the romantic calling forth of a voice from an essentially mysterious nature (as in the opening of the First and Third symphonies); its more abstract summons is an act of social and collective will rather than the revelation of grace or mystery. The sense of force is tangible; much of Part 1 sounds like battle music, not so distant to that of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* composed a few years earlier. Striking in this respect is how much of the vocal writing takes on the shape of the fanfare motifs heard in the brass—the "Gloria" [Fig. 83] sung by the boys' choir, is a good example. If Mahler's *misterioso* music is often characterized by the vocative case, his affirmative finales are clearly in the imperative. Any element of doubt is submerged by the force and energy of this imperative tone, with the opening call of "Veni" magnified by the antiphonal and contrapuntal possibilities of the double choir and double set of soloists.

Part 2 of the Eighth Symphony, with its derivation of spiritual ascent out of nature, establishes a clearer link to the world of the Third Symphony. It begins in a similar space, an empty formlessness lacking the presence whose calling forth is the substance of the movement. The calling across space, from one choir to another,

thus recalls not only the opening of the Third, but also the echoing horns of the Fifth Symphony (third movement) and the Seventh (second movement). Mahler's dramatization of Goethe's text not only sees a sequence of increasingly more "adequate" voices, but it also clearly derives the process out of the formless nature from which it begins, moving from the cliffs and desert of the anchorites to the celestial realm of the Virgin Mary and moving musically from the empty inexpressiveness of the opening, through highly lyrical striving, to a kind of detached, sublimated lyricism of the ending, whose only real parallel is the end of *Das Lied von der Erde*, which it anticipates.

The sustained overlapping lines at the beginning of Part 2 take on the role of calls heard across the vast desert spaces in which Goethe's anchorites are placed. The repeated dyads, attacked fortissimo, and fading to pianissimo call forth, as yet without answer [e.g., Fig. 2]. These lines combine to effect an arrival, marked by the cadential figure in the horn [Figs. 4 and 6]. The sustained emptiness of this opening passage eventually calls forth its opposite, the passionately lyrical voice [Fig. 8, horns and cellos] that anticipates the introduction of the first soloist, the *Pater ecstaticus*. Just as one set of voices calls forth another across the vast spaces of Goethe's landscape, so Mahler's different ensembles and solo voices call forth each successive section. It is one of the clearest examples of a formal pattern exhibited in almost all of Mahler's finales, constructed by a series of "waves," each one raised in intensity from the next. To be sure, these movements may be related to sonata form, sonata-rondo, and variation form, but the effect is most often of a series of gradually intensifying waves or successively higher plateaux.<sup>24</sup> This sense of one voice calling forth the next is built into Goethe's text, as each ensemble or soloist calls forth its "higher" neighbor in ascending sequence. Mahler internalizes Goethe's ascent as form, but he also makes it physically immediate through orchestration, register, and harmonic rhythm. The idea that his music anticipates the filmic imagination is nowhere clearer than here. When the *Mater Gloriosa* appears, she encapsulates the sense of the whole symphony in her final calling forth: "Komm! Komm!" The closing lines of Faust intoned by the hushed voices of the *Chorus Mysticus* are a statement of just this idea: being "drawn on" (*zieht hinan*) is the substance of the entire work.

Elsewhere in Mahler, a calling forth of the collective is presented in less overtly theological terms but is structurally and semantically similar. In the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony the call of the obbligato horn solo is to an idealized (and rather contrapuntal) rustic dance. The horn is literally the "caller" of the dance, leading it back to its starting point whenever it diverges too widely. But the regularity of formal return is eventually interrupted by a different kind of horn call, the echoing horns at Fig. 10 that change the musical space from that of a pastoral to the emptiness of an uninhabited nature (Ex. 2.4). Mahler's echoing horns evoke real calls, heard across the wide physical space of mountain valleys. He achieves this by careful overlapping of separate instruments as much as by echo effects, in order to re-create the blurred edges of sounds heard "*en plein air*" rather than in the concert hall. When he later revisited the same idea, in the second movement of the Seventh Symphony (Ex. 2.5), he marks the horns *rufend* and *antwortend* (calling and answering). Here

the mediating function of the horns is underlined by the burbling noises of nature that answer in the silence; at the recurrence of this passage [Fig. 108] it is marked *wie Vogelstimmen* (like birdcalls), and the return of the horn calls [Fig. 83.5] is heard over the sound of distant cowbells. What is called forth is the more inward, lyrical and reflective voice, heard in the cellos.

This movement of the Seventh is a good example of how the horn call is used to define a separate musical space, with its evocation of spatial distance functioning to demarcate a different temporal space for the music. The music here moves in a quite different way to the surrounding sections, as recollection stands apart from the reality it recalls (note the recall of the waltz theme at Fig. 14). The separateness of this musical space, its distance from the more quotidian business of the opening material, is emphasized by its sudden unmediated interruption by the peremptory return of the opening dance material [Fig. 17]. This sense of suspension, of calling out a different kind of voice, is more emphatic on its return [Fig. 28]. Mahler's horns both silence the *Weltlauf*, the rushing past of the daily world, and at the same time call up something heard only when the daily noise is stilled. The call is thus a kind of breaking through, an intrusion into a different world, just as the "call" of the bone flute functions in *Das klagende Lied*, bringing a lost content into the present. This ties in with Abbate's insistence that musical narrative occurs only when its "normative" voice is interrupted.

A paradigmatic example of such an interruption in Mahler occurs in the third movement of the Third Symphony, where the call of the post horn itself becomes a voice. Heralded by the muted trumpet fanfare that precedes it [Fig. 12 and again, "somewhat stronger than before," at Fig. 13.5], the post horn solo that follows ("as if in the farthest distance") picks up on the same fanfare motif but gradually turns it into a self-contained lyrical statement (Ex. 2.6). A sense of distance is added by the acoustic "haze" of divided violins and the tone of the flügelhorn, one of Mahler's unconventional instruments imported into the orchestra precisely to mark this musical voice as distinctive. Like the echoing horns in the third movement of the Fifth Symphony, this passage also distinguishes two separate spaces. The calling voice again marks a breakthrough into a different musical space, underlined by both the radically different timbral and harmonic space of the post horn interludes and the "out-of-time" tempo marking. The interaction of the post horn with the two orchestral horns (*gesangvoll*) implies an interleaving of voices that were at first separate, an idea underlined by the response of the violins at Fig. 28, where, divided into eight parts, they are marked *Wie nachhorchend* (as if listening).<sup>25</sup> The possibility of a fragile mediation between the two worlds, a liminal crossing of the musical threshold, contrasts strongly with the characteristically abrupt interruption by the trumpet fanfare [Fig. 17] that restores the musical world of the opening.

Such an idea is dramatized, in self-consciously fairy-tale manner, in the Fourth Symphony. The third movement is one of Mahler's most sustained pastorals, a counterpoint of the self-sufficient beauty of nature (*ruhevoll*) and the melancholy it induces in the subject (*klagend*) who remains separate from it. The shift, from the pastoral to a spiritualized nature as the sight of divine encounter, is marked



**Example 2.4** Fifth Symphony, third movement, Fig. 10

**10**

Etwas zurückhaltend

Flutes

Oboes

Cor Anglais

Clarinets in B♭

Bassoon

Contrabassoon

Horn in F  
Obligato

1. Horn in F

2. Horn in F

3. Horn in F

4. Horn in F

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Schalltrichter in die Höhe

Schalltrichter in die Höhe

Schalltrichter in die Höhe

Schalltrichter in die Höhe

geteilt

unis.

3 fach get.

rit -

pp

ff

p

ff subito

ff sempre

ff sempre

ff sempre

sempre ff

fff

pp

ppp

ppp

fff

pp

fff

pp

(continued)

Example 2.4 Continued

**Tempo (poco sostenuto)**

The musical score is arranged in a system with the following staves and markings:

- C. A. (Cello):** *ppp*, *lang*
- Cl. (Clarinet):** *ppp*, *lang*
- Bsn. (Bassoon):** *ppp*, *lang*
- Cbsn. (Contrabassoon):** *ppp*, *lang*
- Hn. (Horn):** *ff*, *Schalltr. auf*, *molto portamento*, *verklingend*, *ppp*, *Schalltr. auf!*, *lang*, *f*
- Hn a 4. (Horn 4):** *pppp*, *lang*
- Hn. (Horn):** *pppp*, *lang*
- Hn. (Horn):** *pppp*, *lang*
- Hn. (Horn):** *pppp*, *lang*
- Vln. I (Violin I):** *pp*, *lang*
- Vln. II (Violin II):** *pp*, *lang*
- Vla. (Viola):** *pp*, *lang*
- Vc. (Violoncello):** *pp geteilt*, *sf*, *lang*
- Db. (Double Bass):** *pp*, *lang*

(continued)

Example 2.4 Continued

quasi a tempo I a tempo I

Cl.

Bsn.

Cbsn.

Hn. *a tempo* *rit.* *lang* *verklingend* *pppp*

Hn a 4. *lang* *pppp*

Vla. *geteilt*

Vc. *p* *dim* *ppp* *unis.*

Db. *pp* *ppp*

*rit.* *verklingend*

Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

Hn. *gewöhnlich* *p* *rit.* *verklingend* *pp* *f*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

Db. *p*

(continued)

## Example 2.4 Continued

Rit. 11

Cl.

Bsn.

Cbsn.

Hn. *Schalltr. auf!* *gestopft* *pp* *gewöhnlich* *lang* *rit.* *ppp*

Hn a 4. *gestopft* *f* *p*

Vla. *geteilt* *p* *verklingend* *pp morendo*

Vc. *p* *pp* *morendo*

Db.

by Mahler in several ways, not least by effecting his own version of a place where “time becomes space”<sup>26</sup> through the stilling of harmonic motion and by means of an increasingly transparent and radiant orchestral sonority. But the shift is signaled also in less subtle ways—by a massive and unprepared eruption of the whole orchestra, the frantic arpeggiation of harps and strings (key framing devices for the imminent arrival of a new voice), and the unleashing of the energy of a unison horn call. It is a paradigm of Mahler’s process of calling forth: the moment of “breakthrough,” the call figure, the threshold, and the introduction of the new voice.

Just as Mahler turns the conventional “found” materials of horn calls and fanfares to unexpected expressive ends, he similarly transforms the oldest cliché of musical representation, the birdsong. His use of birdsong motifs implies a deliberate naïveté but is nevertheless marked by complex semiotic layers. Birdsong is used not only to denote the idea of nature, but also as a call to the human realm from the world of nature. As in the paradigmatic case of Wagner’s *Siegfried*, that call is a summons to a heightened awareness and an imparting of new knowledge. In its simplest form, the birdcall in Mahler thus functions as a kind of spiritual wake-up call. This is quite literal in the deliberately naive exchanges between chirpy birds and sleepy

Example 2.5 Seventh Symphony, second movement, opening

**Allegro moderato** *f rufend* *kurz verklingend* **rit.** *mit Dämpfer* *kurz f rufend* *fp* *f* **a tempo**

Horn in F

Horn in F

*p antwortend*

**69**

**rit.** **Allegro** *pp* *lang* *verklingend* *fp* *kurz f rufend* *p antwortend*

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

Hn.

*p antwortend*

Ob.

C. A.

Cl.

*ff* *p*

Ob.

C. A.

Cl.

*ohne Nachschläge* *tr* *morendo* *p* *immer etwas stärker als die Oboe*

*non legato*

**Example 2.6** Third Symphony, third movement, Fig. 13.4

**14**

**Etwas zurückhaltend**

Piccolo *mf*

Oboe *p*

Clarinet in E♭ *f*

Clarinet in B♭ *p*

Trumpet in F *3* *3* *3* *verklingend*

Flugelhorn *frei vorgetragen*  
(Wie die Weise eines Posthorns)  
*ppp*  
(Wie aus Weiter Ferne)

Harp

**14**

**Etwas zurückhaltend**

Violin I *ppp 3 fach geth.* *immer mit Dämpfer*

Violin I *ppp*

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello *tr* *arco* *ppp*

Double Bass *pp*

(continued)

**Example 2.6** *Continued*

*Sehr gemächlich*

Flug.

Vln. I

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

*sempre ppp*

*sempre ppp*

*sempre ppp*

*sempre ppp*

*pppp*

**DropBooks**

dreamers in the early songs (e.g., “Frühlingsmorgen”) but employed figuratively to denote a metaphysical dimension in “Der Trunkene im Frühling” from *Das Lied von der Erde*. In both cases, however, the call meets with resistance. In the latter, the drunkard prefers the forgetfulness of drink-induced sleep to the painful reality of new life and turns his back on the miracle of spring that has arrived in the night.

As in Wagner’s *Siegfried*, Mahler’s birdsong is not simply a call; it becomes articulate and enters into dialogue with a human protagonist. This is given in song forms, such as “Der Trunkene im Frühling,” but is found also in such symphonic forms as the first movement of the First Symphony; a good example is the dialogue between the solitary cello line and flute that begins the development section [Figs. 12 and 15]. As also in *Siegfried*, the communication of the bird acts as a threshold to a moment of arrival or gentle breakthrough (here the rearrival at the tonic, via a flatward move, at Fig. 15). Implied by this exchange is the solitary protagonist, lost in nature, in a state of unknowing, who gains insight through the intercession of a voice of nature (the birdsong) and thus comes to self-knowledge. The same idea is presented in “Der Abschied,” in the dialogue between the alto’s recitative and the

improvisatory character of the flute line. The disjunction between the two—the unconstrained freedom of nature and the melancholy of the alienated subject—is of course a recurrent theme in Mahler's music.<sup>27</sup>

In the *Grosse Appell* in the Finale of the Second Symphony, the blending of horn calls and birdsong finds one of its most sustained forms [Fig. 3]. It brings together several significant elements. The suspension of narrative direction and the creation of a threshold to the fulfillment of the Finale are linked to the calling forth of the revealed voice that will complete the work. The exchange between offstage horn calls and onstage birdsong [Fig. 29] comprises several elements (Ex. 2.7). The offstage horn call is answered by offstage trumpets, placed so their sound comes from the opposite direction to that of the horns. The trumpets have the triplet figure heard earlier in the woodwind, a figure employed frequently by Mahler to denote the burbling of nature (as in the first *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh Symphony or similar passages in "Der Abschied"). The birdsong arises from within the orchestra, shared between the flute and the piccolo, its improvisatory character undermining any clear sense of meter. These elements are presented in different tempi, which create the effect of several temporal layers, complementing the spatial layers defined by the placing of different instrumental groups (namely, the slow horn call, the trumpet triplets, and the free ornamentation of the flute and piccolo). These overlapping layers are heard over the resonance of the drum roll (at first bass drum, then timpani), more noise than tone. A constant C sharp acts as a harmonic pivot to the D flat melody note of the *misterioso* chorale that follows (*ppp*). The sense of extraterritoriality, heard in the echoing calls across a vast musical space, thus acts as a threshold to the reverential awe of the chorus.

Years later, Mahler drew on a very similar combination of elements in the opening bars of the first *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh Symphony. There is a direct link between the birds of the Second and Seventh Symphonies and those in *Das Lied von der Erde*, particularly its fifth and sixth movements. "Der Trunkene im Frühling" opens with a stylized, ensemble version of birdsong with characteristic grace note figures and trills, a block of (pentatonic) material that alternates with the (chromatic) lyrical weariness of the drunkard [Fig. 1ff.]. The song as a whole frames the appearance of the bird's voice, which is distinguished from the generalized warbling by the use of a solo violin [Fig. 6] now taking up the lyrical material of the drunkard, its character as "song" marked by an arpeggiated accompaniment figure in the cello and spread chords in the harp. Once again, the birdsong marks a suspension of forward moment by a turn to a *misterioso* character and a new stillness. This moment of revelation is separate from the stylized birdsong that returns after Fig. 7, where the solo violin joins in with the metrically regular birdsong. The drunkard's refusal of the bird's announcement of spring produces a massive increase in the birdsong, which becomes a deafening racket by the end of the movement.

What in earlier symphonies constitutes a moment, albeit a structurally significant threshold, is in "Der Abschied" a recurrent element of the entire piece, extending the alternating duality of the previous song to a full half hour of music. The temporal



**Example 2.7** Second Symphony, fifth movement, Fig. 29

**29** Sehr langsam und gedehnt

**Langsam**

1. Trp. in F

Rechts aufgestellt (aus weiter ferne) lang lang

Hrns in F

lang lang (Echo) lang und verklingend lang und verklingend

Bass Drum

*sempre pp* *pppp*

**30**

**Quasi Allegro**

**Piu mosso**

Viel näher und stärker

Tpt. *Etwas näher und stärker (Links aufgestellt)*

Tpt. *schnell und schmetternd*

Tpt. *Viel näher und stärker (Rechts)*

Tpt. *Viel näher und stärker (Links)*

Fl. *(wie ein Vogelstimme)*

*ppp*

*(tr)*

Tpt. *3* *3* *nicht ritenuto* *lang*  
 Tpt. *3* *3* *lang*  
 Tpt. *3* *3* *3* *3*  
 Tpt. *3* *3* *3* *3*  
 Timp. *sf* *pp*  
 Picc. *pp* *3*  
 (wie eine Vogelstimme)

(continued)

## Example 2.7 Continued

The musical score for Example 2.7 Continued is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Timp., Fl., and Picc. The Timp. staff has a trill (tr) and a fermata. The Fl. staff has a *ppp* marking and the instruction *leicht und düftig gespielt*. The Picc. staff has a *3* marking and the instruction *leicht und düftig gespielt*. The second system includes staves for Tpt., Hns., and Picc. The Tpt. staff has a *3* marking and the instruction *näher*. The Hns. staff has a *Sehr langsam.* marking and the instruction *sehr entfernt*. The Picc. staff has a *3* marking and the instruction *Schnell.*. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time.

suspension of the alto's recitative passages versus the metrical march material has been discussed by Donald Mitchell, who shows how the increasing rhythmic freedom of the birdsong (and related stream music) undermines the insistent meter of the funeral march.<sup>28</sup> This is a substantial change to the proposition of Mahler's earlier music, where a threshold section holds up the forward progress of the movement in order to call forth another, more productive musical voice. In "Der Abschied," the music is no longer concerned with a statement of arrival as delivered in earlier symphonic finales, but rather with expanding the content of the threshold itself. It thus dwells on spatial expansion, famously ending *Das Lied von der Erde* with a dissolving of both linear tonality and clear metrical patterning through the pentatonic and rhythmic asymmetries associated with the birdsong and its related material.

In the recitative sections the flute accentuates the bare, solitary quality of the human voice; its quality of stripped-back emptiness is a degree zero of lyrical melody. At the same time, it marks the persistence of a dialogue; the solitary voice, however attenuated, is defined over and against another, hence the barest of contrapuntal textures here. The palpable sense of release at the end of "Der Abschied" is achieved

by the suspended motion of the opening material giving way to a kind of music that seems peculiar to this work, a heterophonic flowing that arises out of the music associated with the natural world—the birdsong and stream passages beginning at Figs. 7, 13, 18, and 36. The stream music [Fig. 7] consists of an asymmetric ostinato (harp and clarinet, later viola) and a freely elaborated, similarly aperiodic melodic line in the oboe, related to the opening bars of the movement (Ex. 2.8). As always in Mahler, raw nature provokes a more obviously subjective, human response (*etwas bewegter*: violins, later horn), which here initiates an alternating dialogue of call and response.

**Example 2.8** *Das Lied von der Erde*, “Der Abschied,” Fig. 7

**7** Sehr mässig (♩ wie vorher ♩)

Oboe

zu 2

Clarinets in Bb

Harp 1

p mit Mediator

Harp 2

Ob.

Cl.

Hp

Hp

(continued)

## Example 2.8 Continued

The musical score for Example 2.8 Continued features two staves: Oboe (Ob.) and Viola (Vla.). The Oboe staff is in treble clef and contains a box with the number '8' at the beginning. It includes a trill (tr) over a triplet of eighth notes, followed by more triplets and a trill. Dynamic markings include *sf* (sforzando) and *p* (piano). The Viola staff is in alto clef and consists of a continuous line of eighth notes, mostly grouped in triplets.

This functions as a kind of threshold because it is the prelude to the recovery of the voice that the movement attempts. A turning point occurs at Fig. 23 (*Fließend*) whose elaboration of a pentatonic scale anticipates the ending of the movement. Its newness is marked by a radically new sonority that is, at the same time, a transformation of an earlier one. The harp ostinato is now regular and extended (doubled selectively by a second harp and strings), and its motivic neighbor-note “rocking” is picked out by a mandolin. The melodic line that takes flight here is given to a unison pair of flutes, the same sonority with which the previous recitative passage has just closed. The moment of transformation is thus underlined through tone. A new voice is found from the materials of the birdsong but now merges imperceptibly into the tone of the 1st Violins [Fig. 24], whose lyrical melody *mit innigster Empfindung* (with deepest expression), marked by stretched-out turn figures, anticipates the closing pages of the movement.

The prominence of the harp in *Das Lied von der Erde*, as discussed earlier, relates directly to the idea of the singer and his lute embodied in the song texts. But its use overlaps with a capacity to imitate the resonance of bell sounds. The tolling of its lower register is used in this way in the closing bars of the Fourth Symphony and in the opening bars of the Ninth. Elsewhere, a deep bell is implied by the sound of the tam-tam; small high bells, by the sounds of the glockenspiel, celesta, or triangle. But Mahler also deployed real bells in his orchestra, of various types and for various purposes. In 1895 he visited a foundry near Berlin in order to select personally bells with just the right tone for the premiere of the Second Symphony.<sup>29</sup> Their function in the Second, as elsewhere, draws on the ancient function of bells as a collective summons. This ritualistic aspect of bells, their call to collectivity as well as an invocation of the deity, is often heard in the earlier symphonies. In the Second, unsurprisingly, it gilds the final pages with the same overt religiosity as does the sonority of the organ; three bells here join forces with two tam-tams to suggest the vast resonating space of the cathedral [Figs. 16 and Fig. 49.7 to the end]. A less grandiose, but more obviously foregrounded, example is the fifth movement of the Third Symphony, whose ringing of four bells is highlighted by the boy’s choir singing their “Bimm Bamm” imitation of the bells, a ringing out that heralds the arrival of the Adagio voice of the Finale itself. As Guido Adler put it: “Chimes ring as a token of celestial life.... They also sound from the mouths of children, as if struck by angels

as heavenly bells.”<sup>30</sup> Elsewhere, bells are less overtly religious but still linked to the sacred and mysterious. In the fourth movement of the Third Symphony, Nietzsche’s “O Mensch” appears out of a nocturnal tolling of single bell sounds, the low harp pedal and single chords in the trombones answered by the high “overtones” of string and harp harmonics.

Mahler’s deep bells are often funereal: the use of the tam-tam in “Der Abschied” justly reappears in Deryck Cooke’s performing version of the Tenth Symphony, at the start of the Finale. In the first movement of the Ninth Symphony the bell sounds are more ambiguous. Bells resonate here with complex musical and cultural overtones; part of their provenance is Wagner’s use of bells in *Parsifal* for the transformation from the forest to the spiritualized world of the Grail Temple. As bells summon a presence, so they often mark departure; the finale of the Fourth ends with the tolling of bells given by the resonant low strings of the harp, as does the *Gesellen* cycle.

Two unlikely kinds of bell are introduced to the symphony for the first time by Mahler and used with striking force: cowbells and sleigh bells. The cowbell does not literally call in the same way as a horn call or a fanfare; it is closer perhaps to the bird-song as a marker of a certain kind of pastoral space. In the Sixth Symphony cowbells appear prominently in three movements, each time to signal the idea of a lyrical voice emanating from nature, or rather, to mark out a space in which a lyrical voice might be found in the face of the otherwise unremitting negativity of the symphony. In the pastoral episode of the first movement [Fig. 21] the cowbells are characteristically “in the distance,” a cipher of utopian space outside the main discourse of this movement (note the coupling with the celesta) but one that produces a fragile sense of forward motion and arrival thus far lacking. In the context of this highly constructed movement, the gesture of calling forth is shrunk to this unprepared episode, and one without immediate consequence. But the cowbells return, no longer distant, in the lyrical fulfillment of the Andante, albeit only to be revoked by the negativity of the Finale. The cycle of collapse and rebuilding that occurs in the Finale uses the pastoral space from the first movement, defined by the cowbells, as the space from which a new voice is called forth. Three times a sense of progression is achieved (marked by an emergent theme in the horns) only to collapse on each occasion [Figs. 105, 121, 145].

As everything else in Mahler, the ritual summoning of the bell is also open to parody. In the Fourth symphony the childlike aspect of the work extends to its instrumentation. The sleigh bells that open the first movement function as a kind of summons, an introductory calling devoid of the usual symphonic rhetoric and couched in deliberately other tones. The sleigh bells return in the Finale, often coupled with a prominent use of the triangle, a sound Mahler uses to evoke the childlike but also the fairy tale or the dreamlike. The glockenspiel has a similar function, as does the celesta; both resonate with echoes of childhood toys. This has a particularly haunting quality in the first and last song of the *Kindertotenlieder*, where the glockenspiel (*Glöckchen* in Mahler’s score) stands in for the absent children.

## Calling Back

To call forth a voice, to invoke or summon a voice, is to call a presence out of absence. The voice realizes a presence through the physicality of sound, a presence that is at once perceptible and sensuous yet intangible and incorporeal. It emanates from the body of the vocalist and yet, as sound, remains ungraspable. In this way, invocation has always been central to religious practice. The deity is called into presence through the voice, while yet remaining ineffable, at once immanent and transcendent. The power ascribed to a later secular and instrumental music owes something to these shamanic origins. But if the power of music is bound up with its origin as a kind of invoking, equally important is its capacity for *revoking*, calling back, resummoning something that was once present. Revoking includes the idea of canceling or annulling: the passage of time is temporarily annulled by a music that makes the past “come alive” again, as space is canceled out by the illusion that what is physically absent is made present in sound.

Mahler’s music often presents a kind of revoking, an annulment of some absence or lack, often conceived in terms of temporal or spatial distance. Nowhere is this more pointed than in the musical revocations of death itself. At such moments, Mahler’s music assumes an orphic quality, making present once more what was lost to death. This orphic capacity to resummon presence is often signaled by a certain use of the harp, framing the arrival of the summoned voice, as it does in *Das klagende Lied*, the “Gesang” theme of the first movement of the Second Symphony, the transition to the Finale of the Fourth Symphony or the Adagietto of the Fifth.<sup>31</sup> Nowhere is it more evident, however, than in the *Kindertotenlieder*, songs predicated on the idea of revoking the radical absence of death through the presence conferred by an invoked voice. They exemplify a central category of Mahler’s music, what Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht and Hermann Danuser have referred to as its quality of “as if” (*als ob*).<sup>32</sup> Mahler’s music often behaves “as if” something were the case: the visionary episode, whether of reminiscence or anticipation, is a fragile statement of how things might have been, or might become, a musical space in marked contrast to the “reality” that precedes and follows it.

Mahler takes his lead from Friedrich Rückert here, finding a musical corollary to speaking in the subjunctive. “Now will the sun rise as brightly / *as if* no misfortune had befallen in the night!” begins the first song. The second surmises that in life the children had looked with such intensity *as if* to burn a memory in their parents’ hearts, eyes which now will be *as if* they were stars. The children’s eyes seem to say “we would like to stay” (*wir möchten bleiben*). In the third song, the children’s father tells how, when their mother comes through the door, he looks at half-height, “there, where your dear little face *would* be.” The fourth begins with the self-delusion that it is *as if* the children had merely gone out for a walk on a beautiful day. In the fifth, the parent laments, “in this weather, in this tumult, I would never have

sent the children out” but concludes with the utterly peaceful thought that “they are sleeping *as though* in their mother’s house.”

The opposition of a bare, empty, or even absent voice, and a fragile lyrical hope is not uncommon in Mahler. But what all of the *Kindertotenlieder* underline is the function of the fragile lyrical voice as a revocation, a calling back into presence of what is otherwise absent. The musical voice here is often bare, as in the exposed two-part counterpoint at the start of the first song. The emptiness of bereavement borders on the catatonic, the inability to give voice at all; the last lines of the vocal part in the first song are marked *Erschütterung* (literally, “in shock”). The voice of the protagonist is thus caught between trauma and the fragile, impossible hope that things might be other than they are. In the first song, this fragile “*as if*” is conveyed by the subtle shift from the empty counterpoint of the opening ten bars in D minor, to the hint of a lyrical, songlike voice and texture in D major [Fig. 1.4] (Ex. 2.9). This change is effected by the addition of an accompaniment figure in the harp (doubled in the violas), the new and rich sonority of a four-part chord, and the doubling of the vocal line by the cellos. Where the vocal line had descended in the opening bars, its quality of fragile hope is now marked by ascent, though Mahler marks it to be sung *mit verhaltener Stimme* (with a held-back voice), as if hardly daring to suggest that “no misfortune had befallen in the night.”

The music temporarily *realizes* the longed for “what if”; the turn to D major, the sudden richness of tone and triadic stability and the doubling of the melodic line do not long for presence, *they make present*. And the tension between this and the absence that surrounds it makes for a remarkable quality of dissonance. Mahler’s

**Example 2.9** *Kindertotenlieder*, “Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n!” mm. 1–15

**Langsam und schwermütig; nicht schleppend**

Oboe *klagend* *p*

Bassoon *p* H. *p*

Horn in F *p*

Mezzo-soprano **Langsam und schwermütig; nicht schleppend** *p* Nun

(continued)

Example 2.9 Continued

1

Ob.

Bsn.

Hn.

M-S.

will die Sonn' so hell auf-geh'n,

Ob.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Hp.

M-S.

mit verhaltener Stimme

pp als sei - - kein Un-glück, kein.

Vla.

Vc.

mit Dämpfer

pp

sempre pp

(continued)



**Example 2.9** *Continued*

2

Hp.

M-S.

Un- glück - die\_ Nacht - gescheh'n! -

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

DropBooks

predecessor in this undoubtedly is Schubert. In the first song of *Winterreise*, it is the sudden turn to the tonic major (also D, as here) that is the most poignant of all; the fragile and ephemeral realization of the content of memory is far more dissonant than the frozen emptiness that surrounds it. The poignant counterpoint of Rückert's text, of the numbness of bereavement and the luminous presence of the children recollected in memory, is thus embodied here by a simple but fundamental opposition of Mahler's music. As in Schubert, this use of the major and minor mode as a tonal contrast rather than a functional modulation proposes a simultaneity of two states. And as in Schubert, and quite unlike Beethoven, expressive dissonance remains unresolved; one element does not give way to the other, but the two coexist to the end.

The same opposition shapes the second song. In "Nun seh' ich wohl" the *Tristan*-esque longing of the opening figure (a cipher of absence) gives way to a brief moment of presence that, in tone and construction, is similarly akin to the *Liebestod* of Wagner's opera [Fig. 3].<sup>33</sup> The D major passage, in 6/4, lasts for only three bars before the return to "reality," but its summoning of a presence in spite of death is palpable; the sentiment of the words remains hypothetical (that the children's eyes had shone so brightly in their lifetimes *as if* to say that they wished to stay here with



**Example 2.10** *Continued*

(continued)

Example 2.10 Continued

a 2

Fl.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

Hp.

M-S.

Wir möch - ten nahdir blei - ben ger - ne,

Vln. I

sempre pp

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

(continued)

Example 2.10 Continued

**nicht eilen** 4

Fl. *pp* *pp*

Ob.

Cl. *pp* *a 2*

Bsn. *pp*

Hn. *p*

Timp.

M.S. **nicht eilen**  
 doch ist uns das vom Schicksal abge-schla-gen.

4

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. *a 2*

Vc. *pp* *arco* *pp*

Db. *pp*

absolute peace with its setting of the words “sie ruh’n als wie in der Mutter Haus” (they rest as if in their mother’s house). The maternal space is constructed here by the static D major triad and the undisturbed metrical and textual regularity that persist to the closing bars. This is underlined by a sustained pedal A (viola, then horn), which takes its cue from the glockenspiel [Fig. 8ff.], the childlike bell sound that resonates throughout these songs like the distant echo of the children’s voices. The orchestral sonority is defined by the simple two-part counterpoint of voice and violin, with the accompaniment figure given by the celesta (doubled in the 2nd violins), amplifying the childlike association of the glockenspiel heard a few bars earlier. The gentlest of orchestral comments follows the closure of the vocal line—first a melody in the horn [Fig. 10] and then a counter-melody in the cellos.

The emotional power of this D major close would seem to be out of all proportion to its simplicity and yet derives its force precisely from that simplicity. It exemplifies the reversal of expressive values effected by Mahler’s music. Pushed to an emotional extreme, as the death of children here occasions, the poetic voice fails to find adequate expression (hence its broken and shuddering quality).<sup>34</sup> The bareness of Mahler’s counterpoint in these songs, the restraint of the voice rather than an unmeasured outpouring of grief, is the key to their unbearable intensity. The “inexpressiveness” of the voice, its numbed quality, defines negatively the force of what cannot find expression. This is underlined by the use of a third voice in the *Kindertotenlieder*. Between the bare counterpoint denoting absence, and the fulsome richness of the revoked voice, are moments of intense *Ausbrechung* (breakout)—impassioned protests that literally breakthrough the otherwise “held back” quality of the voice. In the third song, “Wenn dein Mütterlein,” the father’s numb vocal line is first marked *Schweremütig* (heavy-hearted or mournful), but what is confined as an essentially inward grief finds two moments of intense breakout, the second of which Mahler directs to be sung *mit ausbrechenden Schmerz* (with an outbreking pain). These moments of expressive breakout are marked by a melismatic line that turns painfully back on itself as it descends toward a deferred cadence; in the first the voice is doubled by the cellos high in their register [Fig. 2] (Ex. 2.11); in the second, by the violas [Fig. 7.4].

At other times, it is left to the orchestral voice to register such an emotional outbreak. The third couplet of the first song (“You must not enfold the night within you”) provokes a violin countertheme (played without mutes for the first time and marked *mit großem Ausdruck*) that constitutes an emotional overflowing that the traumatized voice itself cannot express. Its brief melismatic gloss on the vocal line is immediately amplified by the whole orchestra with an intensity that is otherwise quite at odds with this song [Fig. 8]. In the fourth song, “Oft denk’ ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen,” the outwardly sanguine melodic line has a quality of normality that projects the make-believe of an unchanging, everyday world. This acts as a kind of emotional control, a repressive device that almost succeeds but for an

**Example 2.11** *Kindertotenlieder*, “Wenn dein Mütterlein,” Fig. 1.4

(continued)

## Example 2.11 Continued

Fl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

M-S.

trä - - test mit her - ein, - trä - test mit her -

Vla.

*p* *espress.*

Vc.

*Dämpfer ab.* *geteilt* *pp* *sf*

*rit.* **3** Wie zu Anfang

B. Cl.

*p*

M-S.

ein, wie sonst - mein Töch - ter - lein!

Vla.

*mf* *dim.*

Vc.

*pizz.* *p*

Db.

intense moment of breakout in the closing bars of the song [Fig. 7]. The vocal line is painfully distorted in a rising sequence of one-bar phrases that twist the final line of text out of its hitherto unruffled surface (Ex. 2.12). The orchestra breaks out of its *pianissimo* accompaniment for no more than a few bars. Normality is restored, and the breaking of the voice is, apparently, contained.<sup>35</sup>



**Example 2.12** Kindertotenlieder, "Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen!" Fig. 7

**7** *sehr zart a tempo* *warm*

Wir ho - len sie ein auf - je - nen Höhn - im

*pp a tempo* *espr.* *zart*

*nicht schleppen!* *steigernd*

Son - - nen schein! - Der Tag - ist schön auf

*p* *cresc.*

*rit.* *ff* *a tempo*

je - nen Höhn!

*8va* *rit.* *p espr.* *pp*

This orphic element of the *Kindertotenlieder*, recalling presence even in the face of death, is foregrounded in Mahler's late works. At times, the harp creates a rhetorical frame of abysmal emptiness, as in the opening to the finale of the Sixth Symphony or the terrifying intensity of the A flat minor chasm that opens up without warning in the first movement of the Tenth (mm. 194ff.). The apostrophes that Mahler wrote on his working score of the Tenth, almost certainly to Alma, make frequent valedictory reference to the (orphic) lyre, eliding perhaps his muse and his music. Such moments point to an increasing tendency in the later works toward a fragile and broken voice or even the framing of a voice that fails to appear. In this way, Mahler's late works come close to reversing or inverting the most basic strategy of his earlier works, that of calling forth a voice. The same framing devices that earlier marked the appearance of the voice here become the means for highlighting its absence.

Consider the case of *Das Lied von der Erde*. After the brash and bitterly ironic opening song, the next four see a radical retreat of the voice. The second song, "Der Einsame im Herbst," marked *ermüdet* (weary), seems to start from a kind of lyrical degree zero. After the full orchestra of the first movement, the second strips back the music to the barest two-part texture: the singer's lute is transmuted into a wandering ostinato figure (muted violins, *pp*), reminiscent of one of Sibelius's slowly winding figures,<sup>36</sup> which creates the lifeless background for the oboe's "song," the expressive quality of which hinges on its restriction to the repetition and variation of the same melodic fragment. Only gradually does the harmonic stasis give way to something more dynamic and fulsome. When the voice does enter, its melodic line consists essentially of a descending scale fragment answered by an equally plain ascending one. A familiar Mahlerian strophic alternation commences just before Fig. 5 (*fliessend*), which introduces a more conventionally expressive voice (cellos and horn, *edel gesungen*) and thus a brief breaking out before the muted tone is restored seven bars later. This alternation persists through the movement, with the expressive element gradually mounting in intensity and duration. Yet what is striking here is the constant restriction of this expressive voice, its pegging back at the same time as the increasing intensity of each breaking through. The structural repetition of this silencing seems to foreground the breaking of the lyrical voice. Each time the music returns to the inexpressive, frozen world of the beginning, the silencing of the voice seems more certain. Four times the expressive voice breaks out, and each time the opening is restored, as if the expressive event were completely without consequence. The fourth and final time is marked by the orphic harp accompaniment [Fig. 18] but presents a hope rather than a reality ("Sun of love, will you no more shine on me, nor gently dry my bitter tears?"). The last phrase of the alto soloist is once more restricted to the emptiness of the initial D minor (*ohne Ausdruck*), its brief flowering and expansion nothing more than a flight of hope.

The peculiar loneliness of this landscape derives from the apparent absence of subjectivity, one framed by the repeated silencing of lyrical protest. The voice is thus made problematic through its absence. As in Klimt's landscape paintings, nature

may continue, though here in muted and autumnal tones, but almost entirely without reference to the human world. The persistent alternation of two sets of performance directions underlines Mahler's essential duality in this song—between a highly expressive voice (*molto espress, mit großem Ausdruck, edel gesungen, mit zärtlichen Ausdruck, innig, mit voller Empfindung, leidenschaftlich*) and one without any expression (*ohne Ausdruck*). Mahler uses both voice and instruments in these opposing ways, but there remains something particular about the human presence conferred by the voice in this otherwise empty and uninhabited landscape. It thematizes the idea of a voice on the edge of its own silencing as each warm statement is answered by empty continuity; the melodic line of the voice is thus reduced to mere scales. The contrasting sections, brief moments of lyrical breakthrough, underline more powerfully what is absent by the fragility of their ephemeral evocation.

And yet there is much more here than a chronicle of progressive decline. The late works also revoke the loss of which they simultaneously tell. The sixth and final movement of *Das Lied von der Erde* underlines this paradox even in its title. Of the same duration as the preceding five movements combined, “Der Abschied” (“The Farewell”) begins in a state of utter negation which would appear to be a terminal point for the retreat of the voice traced in the preceding movements, yet it reverses this process and ends with one of the most powerful revocations in the history of music. In one sense, “The Song of the Earth” is not heard in this cycle until Fig. 58 of the final song, the point to which the entire work builds as the eternal blooming of the earth answers the bitter despair of “Das Trinklied der Jammer von Erde.” But the voice of this final section of the work is radically different from anything heard earlier; its sense of infinite expansion, a calm but increasingly distant plenitude, sounds like a desubjectivized *Liebestod*, a completion beyond desire.

The opening of “Der Abschied” projects an extreme absence of the lyrical voice; its low pedal acts as a dark blank frame merely for fragments and the simple repetition of the oboe turn figure, a symbol of lyric expressiveness but here amputated from any organic melodic line. Only gradually do the fragmentary materials coalesce toward some melodic formation, as at the start of the Ninth Symphony, but they quickly collapse back to formlessness. The possibility of future lyrical elaboration is kept alive only by the solitary flute, characterized by its improvisatory tone in contrast to the expressionless quality Mahler asks for in the alto's opening recitative. The alternation of major and minor modes, familiar from the *Kindertotenlieder*, here underlies the opposition of the slow march material and the alto's “O sieh! Wie eine Silberbarke schwebt der Mond.” But between the familiar alternation of minor and major, lack and presence, this song begins to interpolate regenerative episodes that break this repetitive duality and thus begin to revoke the deathly emptiness of its opening.

The first of these episodes [Fig. 7] relates to the poem's description of the stream, “Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch das Dunkel.” A rhythmically asymmetric ostinato figure provides the background for a proliferating oboe line, free and improvisatory in character—a piece of nature music that here, as elsewhere in Mahler,

calls forth a more impassioned lyrical response. The violent collapse of this material leads to a restart [Fig. 13] and then a further flowering of lyrical melody [Figs. 14–17] before a second collapse and another restart [Fig. 18]. Once more, the music begins from distant nature sounds as suggested by the poem: “Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.” This constant collapse and rebuilding of a lyrical voice is a definitive Mahlerian strategy, and it finds a similarly oppositional form in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony. But the ending of *Das Lied von der Erde* proposes something else: a threshold to overcoming this cycling duality and the opening out of a new, regenerative voice. The oriental sound world that unfolds from Fig. 23 thus grows out of the materials associated with earlier nature imagery but with a quality of newness imparted by the particular sonority of harp and mandolin. The harp’s expansion of its earlier ostinato sets off the upward figure in the flute that merges seamlessly into the opening of a lyrical melodic line in the violins. This time the lyrical voice does not turn inward or collapse, but continues to expand.

In the larger scheme, this moment of breakthrough is, as so often in Mahler, merely an anticipation; the interpolated orchestral interlude [from Fig. 38] restores the absence of voice heard at the opening. That said, the return of this passage is now opposed by lyrical protest from within the orchestra; the cellos, at Fig. 40, recall the “Ade” figure from Mahler’s much earlier *Wunderhorn* song “Nicht Wiedersehen.” The restoration of the opening recitative [Fig. 48] seems to function as a kind of negative recapitulation, not so much a structural arrival as the confirmation that real progress remains impossible. But the sung text here makes a significant shift toward direct speech: the voice and the “song” with which the work ends are now framed by a narrator’s voice (“He spoke, his voice was veiled”), implying that the remainder of the text is, effectively, direct speech (marked *ausdrucksvoll*)—the protagonist’s voice rather than the narrator’s; present tense, first-person lyric rather than past tense, third-person narrative. And this shift from narrative to lyric is marked by resumption and expansion of the “new” voice [from Fig. 55] anticipated several times but now opening out toward the ending and the final, repeated “ewig, ewig.”

The closing passage is pointedly an expansion of earlier ones in which a lyrical voice, derived from the unrestricted freedom of nature, attempted to revoke the deathly absence of voice heard at the start. The shift from nature to lyric is clearly marked at the threshold that leads to Fig. 58; here the lyrical voice comes into its own, complete with the harp signifiers of spread chords and arpeggio accompaniment figures. From here the music sheds the sense of gravity and weight so palpable in the opening bars, seeming to rise incrementally with each new section. The lyrical claim of the melody is underlined by the drawn-out use of the turn figure. The quality of weightlessness, buoyed up by the arpeggiations of harps and celesta, recalls the parallel moment of revocation in the *Kindertotenlieder* (and thus the *Liebestod* from Wagner’s *Tristan*, whose quality of expansion and weightless release it draws upon). The lyrical markers underline the recovery of song here, the fulfillment of song that the initial recitative implied but seemed unable to realize in the face of the unremit-

ting emptiness of the funeral march. The restoration of a lyrical voice is therefore also a revocation of death. With "Der Abschied" Mahler thus revokes the end of the Sixth Symphony, whose terminal failure to recover the lyrical voice stands as the most unremittingly negative conclusion he ever wrote.

To be sure, *Das Lied von der Erde* constitutes a radical transformation of the lyrical subject in Mahler, in which fulfillment is achieved only through a certain kind of loss. This is carried through into both the Ninth and Tenth Symphonies. Of all Mahler's works, the Tenth Symphony embodies the idea of revocation most single-mindedly, something often seized on as evidence that the sense of terminal valediction at the end of the Ninth was not, after all, Mahler's last word on either life or the symphony. But it is a work that, in more ways than one, comes *after* the Ninth as surely as *Kindertotenlieder* is predicated on coming after the death of the children it mourns. The coming after, the anterior loss, and the present lack are the basic conditions for the act of revocation. That, in the act of revoking, Mahler's compositional voice was literally cut off by death itself is only one of the many powerful interrelations of life and art in this work.

The link between the two is found in the parallel between the last movement of the Ninth and the first movement of the Tenth. Both are lyrical Adagio movements, and both begin with what are, in effect, drawn-out structural anacrusis in which a single, unaccompanied line is absorbed into a rich collective voice, hymnlike in its tone and bearing. Both propose a kind of revocation in this respect: the lyrical, subjective voice, attenuated to a bare, unaccompanied line, leads nevertheless to a kind of reaffirmation. In the Ninth, following the utter negativity of the Rondo Burlesque, this has a quality of defiance to it. In both movements, the Adagio lyrical voice persists even in the face of being undermined—undermined from within, in terms of its tendency to spiral away from its tonal center and by the disjunct voice-leading of its counterpoint, and undermined from without, in terms of the recurrent pattern of structural disruptions and returns. To be sure, the end of the Ninth fragments and fades away, but it also preserves a sense of continuing in spite of that—a result of cadential voice leading being suspended rather than resolved. As I described it elsewhere, "the end of the Ninth thus projects a vision of infinite desire for resolution without any resolution actually occurring" or, again, that "the finale's intense desire to close [is] coupled with the simultaneous erosion of the musical possibility of closure."<sup>37</sup> In this, it is far closer to the end of *Das Lied von der Erde* than to the utter finality of the close of the Sixth Symphony.

Set against such a parallelism, however, are several key differences—not least, that one movement ends a symphony and the other begins one. The end of the Ninth battles, but it also withdraws. To end a symphony in this way is very different from beginning one in similar fashion, and the opening of the Tenth is thus a quite different proposition. In the first instance, the anacrusis figure in the Finale of the Ninth is a far stronger, more defiant gesture; it has a quality of fist shaking about it, albeit a weary one whose energy keeps subsiding. But its forceful tone and cadentially directed line is of quite a different order from the opening line of the Tenth. Here,

the fragility of the opening figure is in complete contrast: scored for violas alone, *pianissimo*, the melodic line is far more attenuated, drawn out over some fifteen bars and tonally vagrant in a radical and disorientating way. Its vocal quality is clearly signaled by the viola tone, and its sense of *senza misura* monody is conferred by the long note values. Its contour, reaching up early on and then gradually descending over most of its duration, is reinforced by the confidence of the opening rhythmic figures, which dissipate quickly into long notes, and a chromatic circling at the end by which it simply closes down into itself (see Ex. 1.4). This is certainly a voice but one that quickly gets lost and apparently is unable to frame a statement or construct an identity. This movement frequently pushes at the boundaries of its lyrical voice as if to risk breaking the voice in the process (as for example, in mm. 69–80). This quality of approaching breaking point is often highlighted by the straining of tone at registral limits; the violins are often left exposed high up in the register, stretched out like a thin, fragile wire (for example, at mm. 267ff. or at m. 239).

In both the Ninth and Tenth symphonies, the first movement alternates between the affirmation of a nostalgically lyrical voice and a denial of its own subjective expression. Both establish a cyclical form in which every return of lyrical assertion is paired with its own negative demise. But each successive attempt to assert a lyrical voice becomes more strained, so that a potentially endless cycle is broken by climax construed as catastrophe. The negative climax of the both movements arises when the linearity of the lyrical voice is blocked by vertical dissonance; in the Tenth, this is the famous nine-note chord, composed of stacked thirds, which acts as a musical brick wall to the expressive subject, heard in the first movement (mm. 203–208) and again in the Finale (mm. 275–83)). The entire symphony is shaped around this central blockage, or repression, of its lyrical voice. All the chromatic frustrations and avoidance of linear resolution are here concentrated in a single verticality.<sup>38</sup> The vagrant and searching voice is thereby denied the closure that expressive identity presumes. The chord thus acts to deny meaning, a terminally destructive withholding of syntactical closure. It therefore constitutes a kind of scream: a thoroughly vocal gesture to be sure but one that marks an outer limit of the ability to speak at all. It is therefore both an expressive culmination and also its negative inversion—a paradoxical expression of an inability to express.

Following the pattern of earlier symphonies, the Finale of the Tenth readdresses the problem of the first movement in a deliberate and self-referential way. The preceding Scherzo (*Schattenhaft*) ends by dissolving into muted fragments, as in the Scherzo of the Seventh Symphony but with its expected close interrupted by the *fortissimo* hit of the bass drum, a gesture of such ferocity that it exceeds the musical context into which it is placed. The recurrence of these blows, punctuating the opening of the Finale, marks an abysmal emptiness, a total nihilism in which the expressive voice is utterly silenced. Mahler had written something similar once before, at the end of the Sixth Symphony, but in the Finale of the Tenth such a proposition is made at the *start* of a movement. Here, the movement does not end with nihilism

but, rather, *grows out* of emptiness, expanding from the barest of fragments heard in isolated voices. The tuba (in Deryck Cooke's performing version) attempts to make a voice out of mere scale fragments. A response is eventually heard in the emerging horn line (m. 11), but its fragile voice is violently cut off (m. 14). These repeated attempts to project a voice (horn in mm. 22 and 27) finally lead to the unlikely blossoming of a genuine melodic line, heard in the flute from m. 30 (Ex. 2.13).

This is a world away from the calling forth of a voice with which the first movement of Mahler's First Symphony begins. This, the last movement of his last symphony, has far more to do with revoking, with calling back a voice whose progressive attrition and denuding his work as a whole both traces and opposes. What is this incomparable flute melody if not a revocation of the negativity that had apparently all but silenced the lyrical voice and with it the subject? There is no other melody in Mahler quite like this one; one would have to look back to late Beethoven to see such a radical revoking of melody and its mythic function. This is a recovered melody, a melody that betrays its origins in an earlier, romantic age yet surpasses its model. It acts as a remembrance that is also a revoking and a resisting, so that its expansion into a fulfilled B major section (strings, from m. 45) makes a voice that is strictly "of the past" glow once again in the present. And with this revoking, the returning

**Example 2.13** Tenth Symphony, fifth movement, mm. 30–46

Ein wenig fließender, doch immer langsam

30

Flute

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

*p semplice*

*pp*

*pp*



(continued)

Example 2.13 Continued

Musical score for Example 2.13 Continued, measures 35-40. The score is written for a full orchestra, including Flute (Fl.), Harp (Hp.), Violins I and II (Vln. I, Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems, measures 35-39 and 40-44. The Flute part features a melodic line with a triplet in measure 35 and a triplet in measure 40. The Harp part has a piano (p) accompaniment starting in measure 36. The Violins I and II parts are mostly silent. The Viola part has a melodic line with a triplet in measure 35 and a triplet in measure 40. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts have a piano (pp) accompaniment starting in measure 36.

35

Fl.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*pp*

40

Fl.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

(continued)



**Example 2.13** *Continued*

44

Fl. *dim.* *pp*

Hp. *pp*

Vln. I *ppp*

Vln. II *ppp*

Vla. *dim.* *ppp*

Vc. *dim.* *ppp*

Db. *ppp*

lyrical voice allows the music a return to linear expansion, a growth that refutes the absence of any such direction in the preceding scherzo.

Yet, at its highest point, this lyrical voice is shot down like a soaring bird. The blows of the bass drum return exactly like gunshots, and the melodic line fragments into a repeated ascending seventh, disfigured like a bird that has been winged, and the whole process has to begin again. Between the brutal silencing of the voice and its eventual return (mm. 190 and 212ff.), the *Allegro* (from m. 84) acts like a massive parenthesis, though one, as elsewhere in Mahler, in which a working out takes place that allows for progress to be made. Once again (m. 275) it confronts the dissonant brick wall of the first movement, but this time the wall gives way to the melodic material by which its negativity is revoked (*sehr ruhig*, B flat major, m. 299). This calm overlapping of two lines comes after the event, the other side of the cataclysm. The persistence of this lyrical voice, in the face of the process that the preceding music outlines (and, indeed, all of Mahler's earlier music), is one of the most unique and powerful of music's propositions. Its quiet revoking is also a refusal and a resistance. It rises to an intensity that binds it to the raging quality of the Ninth's Finale (see m. 353ff., the flute melody now *mit grosser Ton*, violins in unison, *fortissimo*, with turn figure). Not for nothing is the final gesture of the music a cry (mm. 394ff.), the most elemental gesture of the voice, and then a fall, a subsidence into rocking containment (Ex. 2.14). To be sure, this is a closing, but a closing *by* the voice, not—as in the Sixth Symphony—of the voice.

**Example 2.14** Tenth Symphony, fifth movement, mm. 395–400

395 **Sehr langsam**

2. Horn in F

4. Horn in F

Trombones

Tuba

Harp I

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

ff nicht brechen

ff(viel bogen)

dim.

pp

sehr weich

pp

pp

pp

ff

dim.

pp

ff

dim.

pp

In the last bars of the movement, the ascending seventh call figure still echoes in the cello. One last swell of the voice erupts in the violins and violas before falling to closure and the final containment of the F sharp major tonic. But within this chord persists a gentle rocking motion—potentially unending—scored for horns in Deryck Cooke's reconstruction, since its open parallel fifths suggest as much. This rocking figure keeps sounding the G sharp, the second degree of the tonic scale, much as the second degree persists in the closing bars of the Finale to the Ninth and the ending of "Der Abschied," endlessly suspended in its falling motion toward the tonic. On one level it seems an odd figure for the closing bars of this symphony, but looked at another way, it acts like the chiming of bells. It is curiously fitting, perhaps, that the last movement of Mahler's last work closes with the calling of bells, scored as a horn call, both ubiquitous symbols, in Mahler's music, of calling forth—of opening.

DropBooks

# 3

## Constructing a Voice

### Artifice and Invention

Musical works are, self-evidently, made. To compose is to construct, to invent, to assemble. But the idea that the work of art originates beyond the rational control of the artist persists. And just as artists and their audiences have subscribed to this idea, in varying degrees, so artworks themselves both embody and critique it. Mahler's music is distinctive for the way it does both at the same time. My concern in this chapter is not the extent to which Mahler's music was inspired as opposed to constructed, labored over as opposed to received already formed; nor is it with the process of composition as such but, rather, with what the resulting works *are*. Specifically, my concern is with the paradoxical ways in which Mahler's music proposes itself as authentic expression, called forth from a mysterious origin, and yet also draws attention to itself as something made—as artifice.

In nineteenth-century art and aesthetics the voice that is called forth, whether from the depths of nature or those of the Unconscious, claims a certain authenticity. Manifest in language or music, it is nevertheless heard as arising from a noumenal origin and thus expressive of something beyond the activity of the conscious mind. Such a conception of voice that speaks through art fulfills the romantic ideal of genius, of nature giving the rule to art through genius, and the idea that art is expressive of an ideal content—the assumption of aesthetics since Hegel. It proposes, on the one hand, a speaking, soulful nature (and thus an idea of music as able to speak for nature) but, on the other hand, an expressive self for whom the act of expression is constitutive. The act of expression and the idea of an expressive self thus seem to go hand in hand. They appear as mutually constitutive categories in which one requires the other. But in tension with this model of the self and its concomitant aesthetic of expression is the idea of something *constructed*—a music that recognizes itself as artifice rather than expression. A commonsense view might accept that music necessarily contains both elements entwined; there is no expression without language and thus grammatical ordering and construction. But the act of calling forth a voice already suggests a defining self-consciousness; the voice is

not simply presented, but re-presented. In Mahler's music, the content of expression and the act of expression are increasingly differentiated from one another.

But as deconstructive theory takes for granted the idea that the authorial voice is a construct, popular reception moves resolutely in the opposite direction. Mahler's status today is undoubtedly linked to the reception of his music as richly expressive, encoding events of both inward and outward biography. My discussion of the construction of voice in Mahler allows for both views. Its focus is not primarily with a poietic level (that of making) but with tensions in the musical material and its deployment that problematize the idea of a simple expression theory. In other words, whatever Mahler thought he was doing, whatever his own aesthetic, as texts that demand our contemporary interpretation, the songs and symphonies themselves call into question the idea of direct expression that they simultaneously propose. Indeed, this tension between the idea of expression and the idea of construction is definitive; it increases throughout Mahler's output and shapes the character of its modernity.

It may be thought that the nature of art is to cover its traces and to obscure the fact that it is constructed, in an effort to maintain the illusion that it is wholly organic. But as modern thought is defined by a critical self-consciousness, so too the nature of modern art lies in a critical self-reflection about its own conditions. The idea of Romantic irony, associated with Schlegel and his contemporaries, appeared hand in hand with the idea of art as profound and mysterious, the product of inspired genius. This tension is dealt with by means of a certain detached humor and wit in Haydn and Mozart, becomes the instrument of disruptive play in early Beethoven, and the subject of deeply troubled rumination in late Beethoven. In Schumann the deconstructive effects of frequent changes of authorial voice are masked either as carnivalesque play or as a sign of the peculiar psychology of the composer (the opposition of Florestan and Eusebius); elsewhere, in the mid-nineteenth century, it is quietly ignored. In Mahler, it returns with the force of something repressed. Mahler's music is frequently torn between the insistence that it is authentic expression and the proposition that it is artificial construction. It persists, from one work to the next, within each work, and a century after his death, in the way in which it proposes the possibility of authentic expression even while acknowledging the artificiality of its construction.

My approach is thus not to examine sketches or to quote correspondence to demonstrate that Mahler's music was the result of hard work or the abstract logic of compositional construction, even less to call into question the intensity of Mahler's own experience or inspiration. It is, rather, to show that just as this music often proceeds by a calling forth of its musical voice, so too it often foregrounds the elements of its own construction. My concern is to examine how the musical text simultaneously reveals and conceals its own constructed nature. This counterpoint, of romantic conceptions of expression and modernist conceptions of construction, runs through Mahler's output; it is evident in the *Wunderhorn* songs as much as the

late works. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Mahler shows greater self-awareness of this tension within his music after about 1901. The Rückert song, “Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder” (June 1901), suggests a rather mischievous reflection on the whole question. Hitherto, Mahler had repeatedly underlined that the key to understanding his compositions lay in the travails of his own life. All the evidence suggests that he saw them this way himself and that, whatever the finished product, his music originated in the spiritual journey of his own inner life. In comments recorded by Natalie Bauer-Lechner, made in correspondence, and implied in program notes (withdrawn precisely at this time), Mahler appeared to see this as a significant context for the reception of his music.

The sentiment expressed in Rückert’s simple strophic poem, reinforced by Mahler’s deliberately naive setting, would seem to contradict all that. Everything suggests that this disarmingly simple song was a playful and lighthearted warning (to Natalie, or Justine perhaps?) not to expect any direct congruence between Gustav, the man they knew and loved, and the music of Mahler.<sup>1</sup> The poem insists on the same privacy for artistic work as the bees have when they labor in the secrecy of the hive and resists the intrusion of the inquisitive eye that would try to find the composer in the song. It is both self-conscious about the labor of artistic construction and at the same time deliberately and disarmingly innocuous. It avoids lyrical intensity and is almost conversational in tone. Its refusal to allow prying eyes into the compositional workshop is reinforced by a plainness of musical style that suggests that, in any case, nothing lies beneath its surface.

But the picture becomes more complicated when one looks closer, just as the song tells us not to do. This apparently simple song displays all sorts of strategies of avoidance and dissembling maneuvers to avoid expression. Its opening appears to be conversational (Ex. 3.1a); the grace note figures seem casual and unconcerned with any expressive import, though this is at odds with the unexpected chromatic twisting to D flat in mm. 5 and 6. The introduction is built over a very weakly implied dominant preparation, which finally makes itself clear when the F major tonic arrives in m. 8 with the entry of the voice (the tonic triad is not given in root position until the second beat of that bar).

**Example 3.1a** Rückert *Lieder*, “Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder,” mm. 1–10

(continued)

*Example 3.1a Continued*

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 4-6) features a piano introduction with a treble clef staff containing a melodic line marked 'trm' and a bass clef staff with a steady eighth-note pedal. The second system (measures 7-8) introduces the vocal part with the instruction 'Mit Schwung' above the staff. The vocal line begins with the lyrics 'Bli - che mir -'. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pedal. The third system (measures 9-10) continues the vocal line with the lyrics '- nicht in die Lie - der!'. The piano accompaniment remains consistent with the eighth-note pedal.

But this material, especially the opening phrase of the vocal part, when played at a much slower tempo, reveals an uncanny resemblance to the fourth song in this collection, “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” written a little later in that same summer of 1901. It is one of Mahler’s most intensely lyrical and deeply personal songs and one that seems to contradict both the tone and text of “Blicke mir.” Both songs are in the same key; both construct their vocal line from the same 5–6 neighbor note alternation over an oscillating V/Ic pedal (Ex. 3.1b); in this, they both anticipate that other intensely lyrical “song,” the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony, composed the following year. There are further motivic parallels between the two

songs: the extended turning sequence, derived from the use of chromatic neighbor notes in mm. 6–7 of “Blicke mir,” reappears in more lyrical form in “Ich bin der Welt” (in the melody of mm. 20–21, played by the oboe and clarinet, and then again in mm. 38–39, in the solo violin). In both songs this figure acts as a dissonant phrase ending that prepares the return of the tonic triad and opening material. The radical chromatic twists in “Blicke mir” (in mm. 17ff. and again in mm. 44ff.) suggest dissembling, a slippery avoidance of directness. It appears to find solid ground a few measures later for the return of the phrase “Blicke mir” but is in A flat (a tonicization of the G sharp neighbor note) which, by some deft voice-leading, slips back to F major again. In other words, this song is not what it seems.

**Example 3.1b** Rückert Lieder, “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen,” mm. 1–11

**Sehr langsam und zurückhaltend**

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The piano part begins with a *pp* dynamic and includes a *Ped.* marking. The second system (measures 5-7) continues the piano accompaniment with a *Ped.* marking and a *ohne Ped.* marking. The third system (measures 8-11) shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with a *sempre pp und Ped. ad lib.* marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.



Both songs offer perspectives on the idea of an absent voice: “Blicke mir” because it declines to give one, avoiding the idea of a lyrical disclosure, and “Ich bin der Welt” because, although it is intensely lyrical, its topic is precisely the withdrawal of presence. Federico Celestini has shown how “Revelge,” in its heightened use of the grotesque, achieves an absent voice through “the erasure of the lyrical ‘I.’”<sup>2</sup> “Revelge” was written two summers before these songs, though its grim partner, “Der Tamboursg’sell” was also written in that same summer of 1901. So too was the beginning of the Fifth Symphony and the first song of the *Kindertotenlieder*, works where the extinguishing of the lyrical subject acts as a foil to its passionate breaking out. Much has been made of Mahler’s turn to a more deliberately contrapuntal style in the *Kindertotenlieder* and the constructive elements of the Fifth Symphony, particularly in the Finale, are discussed below. All of this points to a new self-consciousness on Mahler’s part, about the nature of musical expression, about musical material, and the relationship between the two in the act of musical composition.

A few months after Mahler’s death, his friend Guido Adler published a key text in modern musicology, *Der Stil in der Musik*,<sup>3</sup> evidence of the self-consciousness of this culture with regard to questions of style and history. Adler addresses specifically the topics of stylization (*Stilisierung*), which arises from the work upon the music’s raw material (*Rohstoff*), and also the “mixing of styles” (*Stilmischung*), which he identifies in examples drawn from several centuries of music history. His examples of the latter include Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* and its debt to the *intermezzi* of eighteenth-century *opera seria* that combine high and low, serious and comic. There is no music, he concludes, that is not to some extent stylistically mixed, and he acknowledges a contemporary trend in composition to bring elements of historical styles into play with the most recent music. One wonders which side of the divide he would have placed the music of his friend Mahler in the following observation: “Only the Genius is capable of imposing his own reading; most people remain at the level of a heterogeneous style made up, higgledy-piggledy, of stylistic patches of colors, forms and sections.”<sup>4</sup>

Adler still adhered to the “commonsense” notion that an artwork is the expression of an artist’s idea (the creative *Einfall*) that precedes the making of the work, but that notion was already under threat from ideas developed within Mahler and Adler’s own culture. In his magnum opus, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (1901–1902), the linguistic philosopher Fritz Mauthner (a key predecessor of Ludwig Wittgenstein) proposed that “there is no thinking without speaking.”<sup>5</sup> The musical equivalent of this is of course that there is no musical idea that precedes its musical form; rather, the composer thinks “in music” and develops that thought “in music.” The popular conception of Mahler’s music opposes such an idea forcefully; Mahler, after all, is surely a composer who embodies most intensely for our age the idea of a direct and unmediated relationship between experience and expression. And yet, for his contemporaries, he was often considered false precisely because

his music was marked by the studied manipulation of borrowed materials. For his contemporaries, Mahler's music was, by turns, ironic, banal, sentimental, and naive but always constructed and self-conscious about its use of borrowed materials and techniques. Critics were often angered by Mahler's music not because they thought he was without talent, but because they felt themselves to be drawn in by a music that was insincere, that might, at any moment, slip into ironic language games. Nor was this a product of the late, more overtly modernist works; it was a central aspect of his earliest music.

### *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

It is tempting to conceive of early Mahler as drawing on romantic traditions, middle-period Mahler as engaging with a more self-conscious Viennese modernism, and late Mahler trying to reconcile the two, forging a unique affirmation of the lyrical subject in the face of its own linguistic liquidation. By this account, it is the instrumental symphonies (Nos. 5–7) that bring the constructive element to the fore, marked by a return to the tradition of the autonomous, instrumental symphony and a more objective, contrapuntal musical language. While this is not entirely inaccurate, it blurs the extent to which the constructive, self-conscious attitude toward musical language is present from Mahler's earliest published works to his latest and to which the instinct toward an authentic lyrical expression persists through even the most constructive of works. In other words, the two are never mutually exclusive in Mahler but, rather, are entwined modalities of his musical speech.

This overlap is made clear by the difficulty of placing the Fourth Symphony. Usually grouped as one of the *Wunderhorn* symphonies (because of the importance of the *Wunderhorn* song on which its Finale is based), in many ways it shows far more stylistic kinship with the later instrumental symphonies. Such a division obscures more than it illuminates. To be sure, the turn away from vocal forces and *Wunderhorn* material is a significant one, as is the more deliberate engagement with traditional symphonic forms. But it is misleading to oppose the constructed element of the instrumental symphonies with the more naive elements of the earlier works because, looked at from another angle, Mahler's use of *Wunderhorn* texts was the primary means by which a constructive element defined his style from the earliest songs onward.

Mahler's music is often associated with the presence of an urgently expressive voice. This is music that is taken to wear its heart on its sleeve. Given this predominant impression, it is remarkable to what extent such a voice is curiously absent in much of his music, often almost completely so in the early works. This is bound up with, and perhaps helps to explain, an aspect of Mahler's work usually taken for granted—his curiously single-minded and anachronistic fascination

with the poetry of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. What should be born in mind here is that Mahler's "*Wunderhorn* style" was not his first. From the little we know of Mahler's juvenilia, it is clear that the *Wunderhorn* songs and *Das klagende Lied* demonstrate a deliberate and calculated shift of aesthetic and compositional style.<sup>6</sup> The surviving movement of Mahler's Piano Quartet in A minor, written in either 1876 or 1877, is much closer to what one might have expected of a young composer in Vienna in the 1870s. It draws audibly on Schumann and Brahms, whose own C minor Piano Quartet, Op. 60, received its premiere in Vienna in 1876 with Brahms at the piano.<sup>7</sup> Mahler's Quartet movement aspires to the same contrapuntal complexity and autonomous elaboration of materials, just as his earliest song sketches are indebted to Schumann.<sup>8</sup>

What such juvenilia underlines is that the studied simplicity and naïveté of the *Wunderhorn* songs (and those written earlier to his own texts, including the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*) were not Mahler's starting point as a composer but, rather, the result of deliberate stylistic choices—unusual ones at that for a young composer in 1880. And although the *Volkston* element of the *Wunderhorn* settings, especially their cultivation of musical irony and humor, are key elements of Mahler's voice, they are also self-evidently an avoidance of the question of voice—deliberate acts of distancing from the idea of a subjective, lyrical voice. His disavowal of such a style in a song like "Maitanz in Grünen" (1880) is striking; it underlines that Mahler took a self-conscious step back from his obvious and direct inheritance of a modern musical language and turned instead toward exploring the expressive potential of older, folklike materials and borrowed voices. Of course, paradoxically, this too was part of that very tradition, at least from Haydn onward; Mahler would have found a good example in Brahms's folksong arrangements, for example, and in his original compositions in a *Volkston* that look back to Schubert. But we should be careful not to downplay the oddity of Mahler's stylistic position in the 1880s and 1890s.

The strangely anachronistic element of Mahler's style in the 1890s is evident at once if one compares Mahler's songs to those of Hugo Wolf, Alexander Zemlinsky, or the young Arnold Schoenberg. In this context, Mahler's setting of the *Wunderhorn* poetry might be read as a way of avoiding the perplexed question of a lyrical voice, allowing him instead to approach musical expression obliquely, through a series of character masks. Although the earliest songs were to his own texts, these are written in a conspicuously *Volkston* voice, which suggest either prior knowledge of the actual *Wunderhorn* poetry or at least a more general absorption of its style. In a letter of 1896, to Max Marschalk, about the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, he commented: "The words of the songs are my own. I did not give my name in the program to avoid providing ammunition for adversaries who would be quite capable of parodying the naive and simple style."<sup>9</sup> Famously, the first song *is* in fact based on a *Wunderhorn* text, suggesting unconscious overlap and that Mahler's identification with the style was complete.<sup>10</sup> He later acknowledged this in a letter to Ludwig Karpath in 1905:

Up to the age of forty I took the words for my songs—in so far as I did not write them myself (and even then they are in a certain sense related to the *Wunderhorn*)—exclusively from that collection. But I think it would be idle to claim any priority in this respect.... I have devoted myself heart and soul to that poetry (which is essentially different from any kind of “literary poetry,” and might almost be called something more like Nature and Life—in other words, the sources of all poetry—than art) in full awareness of its character and tone. And there can be no doubt that it is I, who for many years was mocked for that choice of mine, who did after all, set the fashion going. But it certainly is comical, in the circumstances, that precisely my settings of these songs have still not been performed, down to this day, whereas my imitators are already famous and their songs frequently sung.<sup>11</sup>

Moving from writing his own song texts to setting *Wunderhorn* poems merely distanced him further from the romantic idea of lyrical self-expression. In other words, Mahler’s engagement with *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (beginning around 1887 and thus overlapping with the completion of the First Symphony) is a symptom rather than a cause. He turned to this heterogeneous collection precisely because it embodied so perfectly the musical ventriloquism toward which he was already moving. In selecting preexisting poems he was merely avoiding the necessity of inventing his own in similar style as he had done until then. And of course he often treated these texts as if they were his own, making both small and large alterations to suit his own needs.<sup>12</sup> The *Wunderhorn* songs thus mark a significant and self-conscious moment in the development of Mahler’s compositional voice. Paradoxically, these texts freed up his compositional voice precisely by bypassing the need for one; their deliberately chosen anachronisms and carnivalesque collections of different character voices liberated him from the anxiety of a music predicated on direct self-expression. And just as he invented poetic texts in folk style, so too his “folk music” is also invented—constructed and artificial but in tension with the models on which it clearly draws.<sup>13</sup>

Given that, in the end, Mahler *does* speak with a lyrical, subjective voice, the avoidance of it through so much of his music betokens a kind of deliberate avoidance, if not an act of repression.<sup>14</sup> It begs a question about why the subjective tone is avoided so fiercely in the early music. Why do these songs present such an ironic voice, with almost every musical statement in quotation marks, borrowed from other music, or proposed as the staging of a character? Raymond Monelle suggests that the *Wunderhorn* poetry offered Mahler “the overcoming of subjectivity through the anonymous voice of nature, speaking through the Volk” and that he seized on these texts because they offered him “stylelessness or subjectlessness.”<sup>15</sup> Mahler’s letter to Karpath (quoted above) underlines the historical irony that while he was criticized for being un-modern and old-fashioned in his use of the *Wunderhorn* poetry, two decades later these same characteristics attracted a younger modernist generation.

Richard Strauss, for example, set *Wunderhorn* texts in his Op. 32 and Op. 36 songs (1896–1897), Schoenberg in his Op. 8 (1905), and Webern in his Opp. 15, 16, and 18, composed after the First World War.

Mahler's music, then, does not stand on the cusp between late romanticism and early modernism by virtue of any chronological development from an early to a late style; Schoenberg would be a better contender for such a model. The case with Mahler is more complex. What his music brings to the fore, from the earliest songs to the unfinished Tenth Symphony, is the simultaneity of expression and construction. In this way, he foregrounds an element that defines modern music from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Mahler's music continues to fascinate us, in part, because it is caught between two aesthetics, one that presents musical expression as if it went directly "from the heart to the heart" (as Beethoven hoped for the *Missa Solemnis*) and one that dwells (playfully or ironically) on its own element of artificiality and fabrication. But it would be unhelpful to imagine that this defines the difference between an essentially romantic aesthetic and a modernist one, though that has some usefulness: unhelpful, because while the early romantics were preoccupied with the idea of irony, the early modernists were equally preoccupied with the idea of expression. His music makes clear that the romantic and the modern are shaped by essentially the same tension. Mahler's music does not divide into constructive moments and expressive ones or separate off the artificial from the authentic. My suggestion is that his musical voice moves constantly between these modalities; listening to Mahler is like talking with someone who moves without warning from a serious tone to an ironic one so that one is never entirely sure about the status of what is being said. What is significant for a hermeneutics of Mahler's music is thus not whether or not something is constructed, but *the degree to which it makes audible its own construction*.

What did it mean, in 1880, for a twenty-year-old composer, graduate of the Vienna Conservatoire, to be writing pseudo-folk rhymes and setting them to music as pseudo-Ländler? The context in which such songs were composed, the cultural space in which they were made and performed, makes their materials resonate in ways quite different from what their simple, derivative surface suggests. The tendency for such a song to turn into ideological kitsch is already inscribed in the music. It was perfectly possible in 1880 and is certainly more likely to do so given historical distance; in other words, what today is heard simply as "Mahler" clearly sounded more obviously stylistically derivative and thus strangely dissonant to an audience of his own time. Critics in Mahler's lifetime were quick to see the disparity of the folk materials and the means of their presentation. Eduard Hanslick, reviewing a concert of some of the orchestral *Wunderhorn* songs in 1900, put his finger on the key issue:

Although a folk-like character is retained in the vocal line, this is underlaid by a sumptuous accompaniment, alert in its sprightliness and vivid

modulation, which Mahler gives, not to the piano, but to the orchestra. For folk songs, this is an uncommonly large and indeed refined ensemble.... It is impossible to ignore the fact that there is a contradiction, a dichotomy between the concept of the "folk song" and this artful, superabundant orchestral accompaniment.<sup>16</sup>

Jon Finson cites the anonymous reviewer of the *Neue Musikalische Presse* writing about the same concert, given on January 15, 1900. Having underlined the "indescribable delicacy and artificiality" of some of the music, he continues: "Here all is intellect and reflection, and nothing is further from the composer's mind than naïveté, thoughtless self-surrender."<sup>17</sup>

The extent to which this tension opens up even in his earliest works distinguishes Mahler from many of his contemporaries. Consider, for example, one of his earliest songs, "Maitanz in Grünen." This dates from 1880 but was published with small alterations in *Lieder und Gesänge*, vol. 1, as *Hans und Grete*, where its text is designated simply as "Volkslied." Its material had already been reused for the purely instrumental second movement of the First Symphony. The folksy text of this song is not a *Wunderhorn* text but is by Mahler, in the style of a folk song. It is an act of imitation, of historical and cultural artifice, even just as a song text. By the same token, the musical evocation of a country *Ländler* is imitation; this is not a country *Ländler*, but a piece newly composed by a recent graduate of the Vienna Conservatoire (no home to rural musical manners). And just as the words and dance style are deliberate constructions, so too is the evocation of a village band by what is, after all, a piano song. This is, then, a constructed piece of *Volkstümlichkeit*—a studied avoidance of the sophistication of the later-nineteenth-century Lied and yet destined for the same performance space in the salon and the concert hall. But this is not pure pastiche in the sense of an attempt at exact reproduction; it marks its own constructed nature in subtle but clear ways. There are, for example, chromatic details in the harmony that might strictly be considered out of place. But most importantly, this song is not presented as a *Ländler*, but rather as a scene in which a *Ländler* takes place.

The song presents something that it is not (a country dance) and evokes performers that are not present (a village band). To be sure, this is in the nature of many *Lieder*, a genre in which topical allusions are commonplace and sustained. What is arresting about Mahler's innocuous-looking *Ländler* is the degree to which it appears to give itself up to the model, apparently constricting itself to the simplest of materials. Again, there is nothing in the music to suggest parody: rather, a faithful evocation (as far as is possible on the piano). But the discrepancies between the actual genre (the Lied) and the one evoked (a country dance), and between the actual instrumental forces (voice and piano) and those evoked (a village band), create a tension between what is presented and what is said. Only in the most literal sense does this song "say" rustic *Ländler*; its presentation in this format frames this

content, places it in speech marks, uses it to say something else, to speak through it. This turns out to be Mahler's dominant compositional instinct—to use existing materials, genres, styles, voices in order to say something else. It was, of course, precisely what hostile critiques seized upon as evidence of creative inadequacy (in the case of some critics, overtly tied to an anti-Semitic attack).

Perhaps this seems a heavy weight to place on this innocent looking Ländler, but even here there are signs of the expressive deformations of the generic model that become far more explicit in Mahler's later music. Arguably one of the things that Mahler's song proposes, which the generic Ländler itself does not, is a sense of distance or loss. This is most palpable in the way the song ends, repeating its basic material over a tonic pedal but fading into the distance (*wie aus der Ferne* is the marking in the piano part). This is not an actual country dance delivered directly: it turns out to be an *observed* country dance that, as the end of the song reveals, becomes distant from the observer (in time or space, or both). The song thus becomes about the distance of the (solitary) observer from the (collective) dance. To be sure, this is not unique to Mahler. Schubert and Schumann provide plenty of examples of Lieder in which a sense of distance is introduced into the material that implies a viewpoint removed from what "takes place." But Mahler makes this distance physical rather than merely metaphorical, a strategy that is marked in his orchestral music by the use of offstage effects from *Das klagende Lied* onward. At the end of "Maitanz" the effect of distance is created through control of tempo, tone, and dynamic, but its effect is to create cultural rather than physical distance. This is an act of nostalgic reminiscence; the observer is not part of the Ländler.

Other musical details within the song hint at this sense of separation from the model, such as the parenthetical shift of key from D to F (mm. 27–29) or the slowing up in the middle of the dance for an introspective question about being solitary (mm. 35–52). Without introducing any further voices (such as occur in "Im Lenz" or "Winterlied"), a single genre voice here becomes expressive beyond itself by virtue of the mode of its presentation. Prior to the ending, the primitive folksiness of the material is certainly ambiguous; one might read it as kitsch, a musical postcard from rural Austria to delight an urban bourgeois audience. In that case, the song is a piece of undiluted ideology by which an idealized folk is constructed and, with it, a picture of rural nature more generally. On the other hand, one might, in the context of the late-nineteenth-century art song, read this constriction of material as a constriction of expression, a prohibition of the individual voice in the jollity of the collective. In the wider context of the First Symphony, this song assumes something closer to such an interpretation and, as with many similar passages in Mahler, anticipates Alban Berg's use of popular dance materials in the tavern scenes of *Wozzeck*. Read in this way, the simplicity of the rhyme scheme and its musical counterpart becomes repressive, and, as was to be the case in the *Wunderhorn* texts Mahler later chose, the deliberately plain, matter-of-fact style masks the fact that the suffering of

the individual is dealt with harshly by the collective, just as Wozzeck is by his fellow villagers. The inevitability of closure—of rhyming couplet, stanza, and song—thus takes on a rather brutal aspect.

In such ways, “Maitanz” clearly anticipates the more sophisticated songs of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Both the first and final song in this short cycle evoke a band that is not literally present, but here the opposition of two voices marks the disjunction of inner and outer, individual subject and collectivity, in a far more deliberate and explicit manner. The band music is already divested of any literal representational quality; its short two-bar bursts are a stripped-back mnemonic device, “standing for” folk music rather than being folk music. Here, the constructive element is foregrounded: the lament of the protagonist derives from deformations of the village band music but generates from it the interior lyric of *Lieder* proper, with a lyrical and harmonic style quite different from that of the folk music. The opposition of voice, which produces the constituent tension of the song, is also self-consciously constructive. This early in Mahler’s output, the “authentic,” interior lyrical voice is already found in an expressive deformation of the social, collective material.

Mahler’s employment of *Wunderhorn* texts, or his own poetry written in the style of *Wunderhorn* poems, is located in a wider tension between authentic expression and constructive artifice that surrounded the reception of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* in Mahler’s own time. In fact, a critical argument raged for nearly a century after the work’s publication about the extent to which Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano had edited or added to the texts and on the ethical questions raised by doing so.<sup>18</sup> While Goethe was happy with the editorial additions and alterations, seeing this publication primarily as an act of cultural regeneration rather than merely archival work, others bemoaned its lack of authenticity. In a review of 1808, Friedrich Schlegel complained: “if only there had not been so many bad things included, so many manufactured and odd things mixed in, and deliberate alterations of some songs.”<sup>19</sup> The long-running debate and angry exchanges continued up to the publication of Karl Bode’s *Die Bearbeitung der Vorlagen Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Berlin, 1909) which arranged the poems on a scale of 1–5 in terms of how heavily they were edited or fabricated by the editors. The text to “Das himmlische Leben,” which provided Mahler with the text for the Finale of his most artificial symphony, is known to have been the work of a scholarly writer, Peter (Nikolaus) Marcellin Sturm (1760–1812), so not a folk poem at all, but a pastiche of one.<sup>20</sup>

What becomes clear from this is that in half remembering *Wunderhorn* texts, making changes that suited his purposes, and writing his own texts but in the style of genuine folk sources, Mahler was simply carrying on a tradition which Arnim and Brentano had themselves started. Mahler’s attitude toward his texts in the *Wunderhorn* songs resurfaces at the other end of his creative life in respect to the texts he used for *Das Lied von der Erde*. But while Mahler’s creative alterations represent a departure from normal practice in the Lied tradition,<sup>21</sup> the texts Mahler found in



Hans Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte* were already heavily altered themselves. Bethge did not base his translation on the original Chinese texts but essentially recomposed the poems in German based on earlier translations into French and German.<sup>22</sup> As Arthur Wenk comments, "Mahler's revised text is thus three times removed from the primary source."<sup>23</sup>

Whatever the level of textual and historical accuracy of Arnim and Brentano's publication, Mahler's music draws out this element of infidelity to the model even while it proposes it *as if* it were authentic. David Schiff underlines this element of deception at the heart of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs: "Here is the childhood everyone had and no-one had, a naively sentimental mask covering primal anxieties." When these materials enter the symphonies, especially the Third and Fourth, Schiff argues that "the very forms and gestures of the symphonic tradition are shown to be in complicity with this deception."<sup>24</sup> Schiff's point is born out by the way in which Mahler employs the stock *Wunderhorn* characters, especially soldiers and their distant lovers, denoted merely as "he" and "she" in the score. These constructions of the balladic tradition are used like puppets with generic roles and generic musical voices. But it is fundamental to Mahler's expressive world that these formulaic characters lend themselves to a kind of exaggeration that twists them into unexpectedly intense expression, one that bypasses the usual idea of an expressive lyrical voice and comes close to anticipating the powerful effect of the rude simplicity deployed in a later and very different age, as in Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*. What is divided in the 1920s, between the intense expressionism of Berg and the objective theatre of Brecht and Weill, is in Mahler powerfully juxtaposed.

## The Middle Symphonies

The Fourth Symphony was not the first work of Mahler's to foreground the idea of compositional artifice, neither is it alone in the high degree to which it does so, but it emphasizes this aspect of his musical language more than most and calls into question the adequacy of the expressive musical voice with which all of his subsequent works wrestled. Much has been made of the fact that the Fourth was the first symphonic work to be completed after Mahler's move to Vienna in 1897 and reflects his exposure to the more self-conscious modernism of *Die Jungen*, as manifested in such groups as the Viennese *Secession*. But the Fourth Symphony sits somewhat uncomfortably in relation to these other modernisms, if for no other reason than that, on the surface, its elements of deliberate historicism and naïveté might seem more likely to play into the hands of Vienna's conservative culture than mount a critique against it.

In the first instance, the Fourth is self-conscious about its own status as a symphony. Mahler's first three symphonies are hybrid in character and, as their

origins show, overlap with the more obviously programmatic nature of the symphonic poem in both form and content. The Fourth announces its strictly symphonic identity by a deliberate restoration of certain classicist markers—the reduction of the size of the orchestra and the overall duration of the work, its confinement to four movements, and, in the first movement, its evocation of the classical style both in terms of musical surface and a deliberate relationship to classical form. The Fourth is usually included as one of the *Wunderhorn* symphonies, on the grounds that its last movement is an orchestration of a *Wunderhorn* song and was at one point planned to be a seventh movement for the Third Symphony. While it displays the plural voices of Mahler's earlier symphonies and the same heterogeneity of materials, its deliberately classicist elements sit oddly with the first three symphonies and make a closer link to the three instrumental symphonies that follow it. On the other hand, its fairy-tale, childlike qualities, so often remarked upon, have little in common with the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and are perhaps recalled only in the two *Nachtmusik* movements of the Seventh.

The Third Symphony is eclectic, multivoiced, and heterogeneous, but it carves out of this “total world” a linear process that becomes increasingly focused toward its Finale and, in the end, speaks with a unified and “authentic” voice. The Fourth foregrounds the question of musical voice in a more pronounced manner; to be sure, it calls forth the voice of its own Finale with a great eruption and fanfare at the end of the third movement, but the studied naïveté of “Das himmlische Leben” acknowledges the problem of voice just as much as the historicism of the first movement. Naïveté and historicism meet in the first movement, juxtaposed in the opening bars, as sleigh bells give way to the singing allegro theme of a classical symphony. But the classical voice is one of many, a fact that decenters and undermines the assumption of discursive power associated with its symphonic opening; its self-evident musical pose calls into question the assumed nature of tradition as much as the problem of contemporary style.<sup>25</sup>

This self-consciousness arises from the obvious “inauthenticity” of Mahler's piece of historicism; it draws attention to itself in a way that pastiche would not, though in a gentle manner that avoids parody.<sup>26</sup> It is the distance from the model, the subtle exaggerations and deformations, that signal this musical gesture as a self-conscious piece of stylistic artifice. Thus, the upbeat into m. 4 is held back (*etwas zurückhaltend*) and slides into the key note on its downbeat with a little portamento; from its opening, the phrase lingers and is already wistful and backward-looking (Ex. 3.2). The strange unreality of this material is further underlined by the dynamics. The little crescendo on the upbeat figure is retracted on the downbeat itself, which is unexpectedly *pianissimo* and thus distant and fragile. This is not a real classical allegro, but the reminiscence of one, a re-creation as artificial as the studied re-creations of eighteenth-century ornamental plasterwork on the new buildings of the Ringstrasse.

**Example 3.2** Fourth Symphony, first movement, mm. 1–13

**Bedächtigt. Nicht eilen**

Vorschläge sehr kurz

1.2. Flutes *p staccato*

3.4. Flutes *zu 2* *f* *sf* *ff* *dim.* *pp*

1.2.3. Oboes

1.2.3. Clars in A *p* *dim.* *poco rit.*

1.2.3. Bassoon

Sleigh bells

Violin I *Etwas zurückhaltend* *grazioso* *p*

Violin II *p*

**Recht gemächlich**  
(Haupttempo)

Cl. *pp*

Bsn.

Vln. I *pp* *espress.*

Vln. II *pizz.* *p*

Vla. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *p*

Vc. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *p*

Db. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *p* *poco cresc.*

(continued)

Example 3.2 Continued

8

Cl. *p*

Bsn. *p*

Hns. *p* *mf* 3

Vla. *poco cresc.* *sf* *p*

Vc. *poco cresc.* *sf*

Db. *sf*



11

Ob. *p*

Cl.

Bsn. *f* *fp*

Hns. *p*

Vln. I *arco* *p* *fp* *f*

Vln. II *arco* *p* *fp* *mf* *f*

Vla. *nicht geth.* *p* *fp* *mf*

Vc. *p* *sf* *p* *fp*

Db. *p* *sf* *p* *fp*

The turn figure (m. 4) is both derived from classical melodic practice and an artful piece of nostalgia. The simple string accompaniment pattern here and the chugging woodwind quavers (m. 7) are immediately evocative of Mozart or earlier classical composers. But other things are not quite as they should be. The downbeat of m. 4 lacks any articulation in the bass (it comes late, on the third beat), and this opening phrase closes on the tonic after only four bars, contrary to classical practice, which would expect a half-close here to form the end of an antecedent phrase. The perfect cadence in m. 7 thus truncates the opening theme and begins a new section earlier than expected. Stephen E. Hefling suggests: "Here, and indeed throughout the exposition, Mahler projects an expectation of old-fashioned periodic phrasing that is neither entirely fulfilled nor fully brushed aside."<sup>27</sup> What follows is no more authentically classical. The answering phrase in the lower strings (mm. 7–9) takes on the discursive character of a classical texture but is, on the one hand, too bass heavy (the addition of the double basses has a distorting effect) and, on the other hand, does not lead back to a reprise of the violin theme but to an unexpected extension phrase in the horn. This is at odds with the classical style in terms of orchestration (wrong instrument), phrasing (it intercedes between the bass phrase and the answering violin phrase from m. 11) and ornamentation. David B. Greene describes this by saying that the phrase "begins as though it were an antecedent phrase [but] ...ends with the finality of a consequent phrase" with the result that the following measures (8–11) have nothing to complete and are thus merely "fortuitous." The overall effect of these phrases, he suggests, is that "the image of the self-actualizing agent appears and then evaporates."<sup>28</sup> David Schiff suggests that the opening theme refers to a specific classical work—the Serenade from Haydn's Op. 3. It is a fitting irony, perhaps, that in Mahler's time this was not even viewed as an authentic piece of Haydn.<sup>29</sup>

The gentle incongruities multiply. The violin phrase in m. 11 seems too obvious an inversion of the bass phrase in m. 7, and so the music continues to prevaricate until the return of the theme proper at Fig. 1. The effect achieved thus far is of an opening statement followed by a series of parenthetical, qualifying remarks and apologies before returning to the opening statement once again and getting under way, like a self-conscious speaker putting off the substance of his speech. When the theme does return [Fig. 1], it is glossed with a canonic counterpoint in the cello, a deliberately "learned" gesture in the classical context that implies a rather academic tone. It begins a broad paragraph in which various elements are introduced and knitted together to produce something more persuasively cohesive and exposition-like. It gives way [Fig. 2] to a short, six-bar section whose change of character underlines its function as a short-winded transition, one confirmed by the arrival of a clear second subject [Fig. 3], a broad melody heard in the cellos (*breit gesungen*) in the dominant key. Robert Samuels underlines the unclassical nature of this transition: "What makes this passage different from Mozart or Haydn is the imitation: what would be unison emphasis of the tonal structure in classical period form is divided between violins and cellos and basses, emphasizing not the tonal function,

but the fact that it is tonally *functional*. The music has brought us to what must be the threshold of the second subject, and the hesitation is a mark of genuine aporia, a slippage; no theme whatsoever can satisfy the stylistic demand that such a preparation lays on it.”<sup>30</sup>

In any case, this second subject arrives too soon. The cursory transition is a mere formality here, producing none of the involved process of tonal modulation typical of the transition of a classical sonata form. And the second subject, when it does arrive, is an exaggerated version of one. Thus far the music has had a rather detached quality and avoided lyrical engagement, but this changes with an abrupt stylistic shift for the big melody at Fig. 3, its singing tone exaggerated by its orchestration. Once again, portamenti mark the melody as a wistful reminiscence rather than the “real thing.” This is underlined by its subsequent extension, which quits any sense of classical style as it becomes chromatically complex and drawn out in a more extended orchestral rhetoric in the approach to Fig. 4, before reaching a premature climax and evaporating.

At Fig. 4 there is an abrupt section ending that literally cuts off the second subject material (note the use of the comma, or *Luftpause*, in the score) and follows it by a complete non sequitur. The bare, two-part texture of oboe and bassoon is curiously rustic, anticipating the passage in the second movement of the Sixth Symphony that Mahler marks *altväterisch*.<sup>31</sup> But the simplicity of the material is offset by the punctuation of rather self-conscious *forte* outbursts and the cultivated non-congruence of the different musical voices, a divertimento texture that anticipates Stravinsky in its calculated abruptness. Formally, this section appears at first to be an unlikely exposition ending, slipping into a return to the introductory material and thence to a return of the principal theme at Fig. 6. For the unwary listener there is a certain ambiguity here as to whether this is a genuine exposition repeat or the beginning of a development section by reusing the principal theme.

In fact, Fig. 6 is neither of these things, but rather a revisiting of the opening material more akin to the returns found in rondo form but that then gives way to the exposition closing [Fig. 7] one would expect from a sonata form. The drawing out process between Figs. 7 and 8 (*wieder sehr ruhig und etwas zurückhaltend*) restores the sense of a “long look back” (to borrow Adorno’s phrase) and a wistful air of unreality as the arpeggiated folk figure is increasingly elongated. The languorous tempo and glissandi over wide intervals in the cello countermelody, the slowing up, and the repetition, all contribute to the sense of a draining of energy and stilling of forward motion. Structurally this may not be so strange for an exposition closing, though closure in the tonic undermines the basic tonal force behind the classical form.<sup>32</sup>

Partly because of this, the return of the opening material and tempo at Fig. 8 takes on the character of an unprepared restart, a theatrical event rather than one arrived at by a discursive symphonic logic. The divertimento character implied earlier now comes to the fore in the development section that is characterized by

the counterpoint of solo voices (the violin is particularly prominent). Heterogeneous particularity, familiar from the *Wunderhorn* songs, here comes into tension with a more abstract and integrated symphonic ambition. The development as a whole makes a far more complex proposition than was suggested by the opening of this movement, retrospectively underlining the assumed, artificial character of its naïveté. It is plural in terms of its highly differentiated voices, but also of its sectional, fragmentary sequence. At the same time, this more complex and suddenly more “modern” proliferation is bound together by a discourse of development and contrapuntal integration.

But just as this more earnest direction is framed on one side by the more playful artifice of the exposition, so it is on the other by a similarly self-conscious recapitulation. As the exposition ends in the tonic, thus neutralizing the tonal tension on which the classical sonata is predicated, so the preparation for the recapitulation is diverted by a long G-pedal from Fig. 16 (rather than the expected D-pedal), harmonized as a 6/4 chord and thus implying a move to the subdominant. The celebratory *tutti* section here, an affirmative march, *does* seem to function as long-range structural preparation for the moment of recapitulatory arrival (complete with the chiming bells of tam-tam, glockenspiel, and triangle). But the moment of recapitulation will not be the affirmative arrival that this promises, and the march dissipates in one of Mahler's famous moments of collapse [Fig. 17]. As if to muster the fragmented forces, pulling away centrifugally from the structural purpose at hand, a trumpet fanfare introduces a call to muster, a *kleine Appell* [Fig. 17.4].<sup>33</sup> In the context of this childlike movement, with its triangle, glockenspiel, and sleigh bells, the trumpet call is apt to sound like that of a toy, the fanfare deriving from the nursery rather than the battleground. Similar uses of such a muted trumpet fanfare elsewhere, such as in the post horn episode in the third movement of the Third Symphony, underline its function as a dispeller of dreams, a call to awake, a self-conscious exposure by the composer of the artificiality of the narrative form that recalls similar devices in the fiction of E. T. A. Hoffmann. In a typically grim Mahlerian reversal (recalling a favorite strategy of Hoffmann), it is exactly the same figure that opens the funeral march that forms the first movement of the Fifth Symphony.

Its playful character here is reinforced by the fact that the call to muster, while ending the minor crisis, does not deliver the arrival it seems to call forth. Instead, the music simply comes to a halt, its energy evaporating midphrase with the caesura on the bar line at Fig. 18. The bars before are marked *streng im Takt* and *nicht ritenuto*, yet the sense of temporal progression, already undermined by the sudden transparency of texture, reduced dynamic, and loss of bass register, is simply suspended by the caesura. With no further preparation the recapitulation begins on the other side of this break. Thus unprepared, the recapitulation fails to appear as a logical structural outcome as would be expected in classical practice. In fact, the moment of recapitulation here is marked not by a reprise of the opening phrase of the exposition, but by a closing phrase that cadences into the following bar. The

expectation of structural and tonal return is thus undercut by this single diminutive phrase. It is a play with sonata form worthy of Haydn.

There is nothing classical about the way in which the movement closes; a series of performance directions [from Fig. 23.9] are the outward markers of a stilling of musical dynamism (*Ruhig und immer ruhiger werden, allmählich zurückhaltend, etwas zögernd*). The drawing out of material taken from the end of the exposition continues at the end of the recapitulation in more extended form, with a massive registral expansion created by the 1st Violins playing in their upper register over a low double bass pedal (anticipating the spatial expansion that occurs at the end of the third movement). The Schubertian tone heard at the end of the exposition is now expanded, with the sense of dreamlike recollection heightened by a fragmentation of materials and the suspension of any regular metrical pattern by caesuras and short *accelerando/ritardando* sequences. The solo horn [Fig. 24.8] gives what is effectively a phrase of *senza misura* recitative. Typically Mahlerian is the way that this dream image is then swept aside by a boisterous ending, as if to return at once to the everyday.

If the first movement undermines its own classical claims, the artificiality of these are further exposed by the fact that the remaining movements make little or no reference to a classical vocabulary or rhetoric, underlining that the significance of its classical markers lay not so much in drawing out any specific historicism but in the idea of stylistic play *as such*. The larger plot of the symphony as a whole is that having foregrounded the question of musical artifice and highlighted its own constructed nature, it seeks to discover some more adequate, “called forth” voice. This calling forth is dramatically staged at the end of the third movement, which acts as a threshold to the new voice of the Finale. For this reason, while each movement is stylistically distinct, a central divide separates the first two movements from the last two. The first two foreground their own constructed nature (one referencing a historical art music tradition, the other an idea of folk music), whereas the latter pair both propose versions of an authentic lyrical voice (one evoking nature, the other a vision of heaven).

The second movement, functioning as the scherzo, brings together a carnivalesque profusion of voices that recalls the plural voices of animal life in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (in songs like “Ablösung im Sommer” or “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt”). After the first movement’s play with the outward shell of classical sonata form, and its implications of integration and abstract structural unity, the second movement is presented as its stylistic opposite, a negative reversal (embodying the infinite destruction of romantic irony and recalling Liszt’s portrait of Mephistopheles in the *Faust Symphony*). The scherzo makes thematic the noncongruence of voices, deploying in proximity, both vertically and horizontally, a heterogeneous collection of soloists that confers on the music the character of a divertimento. The evocation of folk materials is distorted from the start. The *scordatura* solo violin (tuned a tone higher) may be marked *Wie ein Fidel* in order for the orchestra’s leader



to capture better the harsher tone of a peasant violinist (as program note writers always inform us), but this is not a case of programmatic realism. The folk music of this scherzo is every bit as deformed, alienated, and thus alienating as the folk music in Berg's *Wozzeck*, which it was later to shape. The opening bars demonstrate how Mahler's disjunct musical voices interrupt each other and work at tonal and rhythmic cross-purposes. The rustic "rudeness" of this movement is thus the antithesis of the aristocratic, eighteenth-century costume of the first. But just as the classicism of the first movement was not genuine (but the starting point of an internal stylistic critique), so too the second movement is not real folk music but something far more oblique. Both movements construct a stylistic voice that is clear but also exaggerated and subtly deformed, evoking specific musical and cultural identities yet calling them into question and drawing attention to their own artifice.<sup>34</sup>

The third movement is markedly different. Building on the association of slow movements with the presentation of an authentic, lyrical voice, this *Poco adagio* highlights the constructed nature of the other movements by its difference from them. Where the formal collapses and disjunctions in the preceding two movements draw attention to the element of fabrication, in the third movement the unfolding of the music is presented self-consciously as a true, authentic journey. The massive *Durchbruch* [Fig. 12] that shatters its musical world is thus proposed as quite different from the merely rhetorical disruptions of the earlier movements. For all that, this moment of structural eruption suggests a theatricality at odds with the hitherto lyrical mode; it allows an intrusion of operatic gesture into what is otherwise idyll, dramatizing an interior event through the outward drama of theater in order to prepare a threshold to the Finale.<sup>35</sup>

This is the turning point of the symphony. A work that has thus far been predicated on a display of self-conscious artifice is now broken through by the calling forth of a quite different musical voice; echoing horn calls [Fig. 12.4] redefine the musical space. The threshold to which they lead is designated *Sehr zart und innig*, the latter a key marker for Mahler's presentation of an authentic, sincere, interior voice. The threshold itself is constructed by the fragile violin melody dissolving into a multiply divided texture, as line turns into harmony by means of a kind of orchestral prism. The sense of something solid dissolving into something ethereal is reinforced by the harp arpeggiations, the slowing of tempo and blurring of meter, and the progressive desubstantialization of the orchestral sonority. At the same time, its aura of revelation is underpinned by the harmonic signifier of unprepared lateral shifts: E major to C major, and C major to D major.

But this *locus classicus* of Mahlerian interiority, marked by suspension, threshold, and revelation, gives way in the fourth movement to what is a paradigm of the self-consciously framed, constructed voice. The threshold of the heavenly is, after all, hardly to be crossed (as Schoenberg later acknowledged by failing to go beyond a similar point in *Die Jakobsleiter*). Mahler, nevertheless, attempts to give musical voice to a content beyond the threshold at which Schoenberg goes silent. But how to

embody a transcendent voice, to realize in sounding musical materials what, by definition, must exceed the nature of what has been heard thus far?<sup>36</sup> Mahler's strategy is to step back from the idea of an intense *espressivo* and conventional tone. In its place, he presents a naive and childlike voice that, in a manner similar to the idea of the *Naturlaut*, is defined by its "extraterritoriality," its difference to the conventional tone and rhetoric of symphonic material. It makes an ambivalent claim: on the one hand, it underlines the impossibility of giving voice to a transcendent content; on the other hand, by its very sonorous presence, it invites the listener to take it as representation and embodiment.

Mahler was painfully aware of the precariousness of this strategy and the likelihood of his own intentions being misunderstood, as evidenced by the performance direction to the soprano that the vocal part is "to be sung with childlike and serene expression; absolutely without parody." The problem of trying to realize the fulfilled state on the far side of such a threshold lies at the heart of Mahler's music. In the closing section of *Das Lied von der Erde* Mahler's solution was again to find a different kind of voice, one that emerges in the work as if "from outside." But there, as in the Finale of the Fourth Symphony, such a voice is necessarily the result of a certain degree of stylization. In the Fourth, the childlike has to stand as a symbol of an unrealized state by means of the idea of reminiscence, through the idea of revocation or restitution as the cipher for something as yet unrealized. The result is notoriously ambivalent. Mahler's attempt to find a voice beyond conventional symphonic rhetoric risks collapsing the heavenly into a kitsch vision of Austrian folksiness, the rustic idyll of the Viennese bourgeoisie, and the ideological counterpart of Habsburg urban culture.

Nothing, apparently, could be further from the start of the Fifth Symphony, a work that Deryck Cooke suggested is built upon "two manifest and utterly opposed attitudes."<sup>37</sup> But this opposition is first and foremost not simply one of joyful versus tragic musical materials, but, once again, of the proposition of an authentic, lyrical voice and its own deconstruction. Nowhere is this opposition more clearly marked than in the contrast between the Adagietto and the Finale. Juxtaposed with the Adagietto's presentation of an overtly "authentic" voice, the Finale is a naked act of self-construction. To be sure, it begins with a call, but no longer the calling forth of a voice from the depths of an unformed, mysterious nature. The call here initiates a transparent act of construction from the assembled fragments gathered in the opening bars (Ex. 3.3).<sup>38</sup> Of all the places to expose this act of construction, the start of the Finale—historically the culmination of the preceding movements—might be thought to be the most self-conscious. Once again, Mahler revisits the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth, and, as in that model, there are several new beginnings here. The opening exchanges of horn and woodwinds presents itself as if it were the unfolding of the composer's own process of composition, as if the symphony were somehow being invented "live" before the listeners' ears. Having tried out a couple of fanfare motifs and answering phrases, a more collective, more suitable finale opening gets

going with the allegro, but only to collapse and be interrupted by a re-beginning [Fig. 2]. The fanfare motif is here discarded for something more abstract—the opening of a fugue no less, the epitome of autonomous and objective musical construction. Both beginnings propose an outward collective voice in response to the opening horn call, one through a chorale topic, the other through fugue, and both are thus the antithesis of the solitary interiority of the Adagietto.

The antithesis is underlined by the insistently contrapuntal nature of the Finale in contrast to the essentially lyrical nature of the Adagietto. In fact, counterpoint is much in evidence throughout the other movements of the symphony too, even intruding where it should not, as in the bucolic scherzo [e.g., from Fig. 26]. Counterpoint is central to Mahler's construction of the affirmative finale-voice, as it was in Beethoven's Ninth. A number of contemporary critics picked up on this aspect. Richard Batka, for example, describing the Finale of the Fifth Symphony,

**Example 3.3** Fifth Symphony, fifth movement, mm. 1–27

**Allegro**

The musical score for Example 3.3 consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes the Bassoon, Horn in F, and Violin I. The Bassoon part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The Horn in F part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The Violin I part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The second system includes the Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Horn. The Oboe part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The Clarinet part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The Bassoon part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The Horn part begins with a whole note rest, followed by a half note rest, and then a quarter note G4. The score includes various dynamic markings and tempo changes.

**First System:**

- Bassoon: *lang*, *fp verklingend*, *f*
- Horn in F: *fp verklingend*, *f*, *fp*
- Violin I: *lang*, *pp verklingend*

**Second System:**

- Ob.: *zögernd*, *p*
- Cl.: *zögernd*
- Bsn.: *f*
- Hn.: *Allegro*

(continued)

**Example 3.3** Continued

**12** **Allegro** **Etwas langsamer**

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

*a tempo* *p*

**18** **riten.**

Ob.

Cl.

Hn.

*f* *p*

**23** **Allegro giocoso. Frisch**

Ob.

Bsn.

Hn.

Vc.

*f* *mf* *p* *f*

underlined that “a sprightly double fugue shows man joyfully at work.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Otto Neitzel suggested that “over the whole work prevails a cheerful joy in work.”<sup>40</sup> Aside from Mahler’s interest in Bach and issues of style and orchestration, counterpoint in the Fifth Symphony foregrounds the idea of music as work, as constructive activity.<sup>41</sup>

The interruptions to the Finale continue with a lateral move to a *grazioso* section before Fig. 4 and then by “rude” *sforzandi* that fragment the musical texture [Figs. 4.12 and 4.16]. This fragmentation produces a subsidence of the fugal energy, though without any closure or resolution, and the resumption of the chorale passage [Fig. 5]. There is a sense of progress here, if only from the sense that the music moves from a divertimento beginning to a genuine orchestral tutti after Fig. 5, but the sectional nature of this opening and its constant interruptions underline that this cumulative growth is constructed rather than organic. Between the obvious formal cracks, the music emerges as assembled, rather than simply voiced as a single expressive statement. The presence of a collective voice is clear, but it is a constructed one; after its collapse, at Fig. 26, it has to be reassembled all over again.<sup>42</sup>

The Finale of the Fifth ends with a brass chorale in D major, the kind of affirmation that a symphonic finale was expected to deliver. But such a gesture of large-scale resolution was traditionally the outcome of a developmental process that, arguably, does not take place in Mahler’s Fifth Symphony. That the final D major chorale is anticipated by a statement, in the second movement of the symphony, only to have its energy drain away and then be abandoned, is paradoxically part of that lack of structural preparation. The chorale ending also is constructed, gestural rather than logical or discursively necessary. As if to emphasize and acknowledge this, the closing bars of the symphony break down in a musical joke much like the closing bars of the first movement of the First Symphony. There are several such moments in Mahler of bathetic collapse at the height of affirmative grandeur; the end of the Finale of the Seventh Symphony is another where a self-conscious question mark is similarly placed next to an apparently celebratory ending.

In this, and several other respects, the Finales of the Fifth and Seventh symphonies share much common ground. The festive character of the Finale to the Seventh is underlined by a curiously self-conscious reference to Wagner’s overture to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, itself an act of historicism in its evocation of the collectivity of an archaic festival. Mahler’s quotation is thus of another historical citation.<sup>43</sup> Paul Bekker suggested that there were echoes not just of *Die Meistersinger*, but also of Lehár’s *Die Lustige Witwe* and Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.<sup>44</sup> While the outward markers of affirmative, festive music are clear enough—the C major tonality, the fanfare figures, the opening drum figure—they are nevertheless undermined here too by formal breaks and non sequiturs. This is music that draws attention to its own hiatuses and ruptures, its own ill-fitting joins and stylistic cracks. The affirmative music of the Seventh Symphony thus appears as the proposition of a collective festival rather than the realization of one. Or, to put it

another way, it stages the performance of a festival (much as Wagner does in *Die Meistersinger*).<sup>45</sup>

It is by no means insignificant that the finales of both the Fifth and Seventh symphonies are in rondo form. The constructed affirmation is simply re-proposed by successive, cyclic returns rather than being the outcome of a linear, dramatic logic. The return of the rondo theme is strangely compelling but also has something arbitrary about it because it arises from a purely formal scheme rather than dramatic or expressive need. The nature of the brass writing in the Finale of the Seventh, especially the persistently high writing for the trumpet, tends to underline an element of persuasive force in the musical gesture, at times to the point of stridency.<sup>46</sup> Changes of musical voice are foregrounded by frequent switching of materials and tone, as massive brass *tuttis* give way to chamber music textures and a divertimento use of solo instruments in baroque-like counterpoint. Even in the first movement of the Seventh, which presents itself as the most straightforwardly symphonic, there is too much symphonic rhetoric, too many structural downbeats prepared and then avoided, as if the logical directedness of the Beethovenian symphony is always being announced or prepared but never quite delivered. Structurally, the Finale accrues rather than develops by a series of non sequiturs and formal disjunctions of apparently unrelated materials, often marked by abrupt changes of pace and strangely abstract, contrapuntal passages contrasted with more obviously rhetorical fanfare materials. It is not shaped, as are earlier symphonic movements in Mahler, by an inner drama, a programmatic or novel-like direction. By contrast, it seems self-propelling and autonomous, disavowing the earlier dramas by a process of section-by-section assemblage (e.g., from three measures before Fig. 248ff.). It makes for a kind of structural polyphony, as if several musical trajectories were going on at the same time. As at its start, the movement sounds like the gathering of different groups of characters in an operatic crowd scene, in which context Mahler's reference to *Die Meistersinger* is entirely apt.

For all that, the Finale achieves what it proposes by sheer willpower: the bell-like pealing of the horns in the closing section and the brass arpeggiations in the final bars (recalling the similar ending of Brahms's Second Symphony) persuade the listener that this *is* real, not merely propositional. The Finale of the Seventh is neither an ironic subversion of the lyrical voice nor a merely constructive game. It avoids the unilinear narration of the expressive voice and explores instead a way of making that admits of plural voices and binds them together in something that balances, however precariously, multiplicity and structural "hanging together" (*Zusammenhang*, as Schoenberg might have said). All the non sequiturs, plural directions, episodes, unprepared returns are contained within a larger whole, just as the writing of Jean Paul or Hoffmann coheres as a work despite the disruption of authorial interventions.

In general the tendency toward a foregrounded constructive element in the Fifth is considerably exaggerated in the Seventh, a symphony in which no movement is immune from the constant presence of artifice, the exposing of musical materials

and language for what they are—received linguistic formulae, building blocks of musical grammar, habits of speech in which the romantic notion of expression persists intermittently. It is perhaps for this reason that Deryck Cooke, in an assessment out of character with his overall opinion of Mahler, once described the Finale of the Seventh Symphony as *Kapellmeistermusik*, suggesting that much of the material was “of remarkable banality” and that “the finale is largely a failure.”<sup>47</sup> It is not that expressive, lyrical voices are absent, but their presentation makes them ambivalent: they strain at the limits and are exaggerated in such a way that they risk becoming false. This is true of the famous “Alma” theme that forms the second subject to the Sixth Symphony’s first movement. It is not that the hyper-lyricism of this passage is insincere or deliberately ironic, but that its very intensity strains at the limits of the language on which it is based in such a way as to reveal its inadequacy, just as shouting reveals the failure of words alone. The predominant orchestral tone of both the Sixth and the Seventh, defined by frequent doublings (often by four of the same wind instrument), makes for something too insistent. In the end one is bowled over by the sheer force of Mahler’s tone. Elsa Bienenfeld was one contemporary critic who drew attention to this stridency, suggesting that the rejoicing in the Finale of the Seventh has a tendency toward “a shouting for joy that sounds coarse and inelegant.”<sup>48</sup>

The Seventh Symphony is not without lyrical voices, but these too frame themselves and draw attention to their own conventional materials. Poised precariously between expression and deconstruction, they create a strangely ambivalent impression. An example of this occurs in the first movement [Fig. 14.10 to Fig. 16.5]. In this passage, the violins (in parallel octaves) become a singing voice, complete with operatic pauses on the uppermost notes of melodic phrases, arpeggiated accompaniment figures in the cello, melodic turn figures, and the sequence of turning phrases identified as part of Mahler’s lyrical breaking out. Even more obviously framed in this way is the breakthrough of a utopian voice at Fig. 39.5. Once again the “vocal line” is heard in the violins in parallel octaves over arpeggiated accompaniment figures in the lower strings and harp (Ex. 3.4). Raymond Monelle, drawing attention to the stylistic incongruity of this passage, characterized it as a sudden intrusion of Richard Strauss into Mahler’s symphony.<sup>49</sup> It takes on a gestural character, its proposition of lyrical attainment compromised by the exaggeration of its own materials and tone. This is entirely fitting for what is, in the context of this movement, an interpolated episode, pointing to a content as yet unrealized, as is underlined by this lyrical episode being cut off by the grim return of the Adagio funeral march [Fig. 42.4]. Once again, the intensity of the lyrical passage is no parody, but in straining beyond itself it exposes its own artifice and underlines its own constructed nature.

This tension is clearly exposed in the two *Nachtmusik* movements, whose artificiality has long been remarked upon. The two “Serenades” remain odd movements even in the context of Mahler’s music; their significance lies as much in what they

**Example 3.4** Seventh Symphony, first movement, Fig. 14.10 (strings only)

Mit grossem Schwung

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

*pp espr.* *sf* *pp*

*pp espr.* *sf* *pp*

*pizz.*

*pizz.* *arco* *pizz.*

*p* *pizz.* *p*

15

*drängend*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*pp* *p* *p*

*Varco*

*3* *p*

*sempre p* *p*

(continued)



**Example 3.4** Continued

Vln. I: *pp* (first measure), *pp pp cresc.* (second measure)  
 Vln. II: *pp* (first measure), *p cresc.* (second measure)  
 Vla.: *p* (first measure), *p* (second measure)  
 Vc.: *pp* (first measure), *p cresc.* (second measure)  
 Db: (first measure), (second measure)

Vln. I: *pp* (measure 3), *drängend* (measure 4), *ff* (measure 5)  
 Vln. II: *pp* (measure 3), *drängend* (measure 4), *ff* (measure 5)  
 Vla.: *pp* (measure 3), *cresc.* (measure 4), *ff* (measure 5)  
 Vc.: *pp subito arco* (measure 3), *cresc.* (measure 4), *ff* (measure 5)  
 Db: *pp* (measure 3), *cresc.* (measure 4), (measure 5)

(continued)

**Example 3.4** Continued

16

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vcl.

Db.

*f*

*pizz.*

*p*

*arco*

*sf*

*f*

*p*

*sf*

*cresc.*

[illegible]

are not as in what they are. Neither of them is an expressive, lyrical slow movement, such as the Adagietto of the Fifth or the Andante of the Fourth Symphony. Both Serenades conspicuously avoid such a voice and, in its place, reference a framed and conventional kind of lyricism that places the expressive voice most definitely in quotation marks. As John Williamson remarked, the idea of the expected slow movement of the post-Beethoven tradition here “seems to be swallowed up in the character piece, suggesting a return to the notion of the symphony as some form of ennobled divertimento.”<sup>50</sup> The first Serenade is apparently predicated on the idea of calling forth, but this elemental aspect of Mahler's music is here, for the first time, in quotation marks; the calling forth of a voice is presented as part of a historical romanticism and therefore something lost to the past. This is underlined by Alma's comment about the link to Eichendorff's poetry but is audible also in the *Wunderhorn* echoes (especially the march topics, e.g., after Figs. 72 and 75), materials that were already evocative of a past when Mahler first deployed them, but doubly so within the context of his later music. After the introductory calling forth, the Serenade that follows [Fig. 72] is conspicuously constructed, underlined by the academic counterpoint of cello and horn that sits uncomfortably in a simple serenade.

Similar distancing devices are foregrounded in the second Serenade to produce a knowing, self-conscious historicism that obtrudes oddly amid the obvious modernisms of the Seventh Symphony. The opening cadential gesture in the solo violin seems to fulfill the function Adorno notes in the opening bars of the Fourth Symphony—that of the “once upon a time” that frames the story that follows it. The burbling accompaniment figures, with their putative link to the nocturnal landscapes of Eichendorff, evoke distance in time and place as much as the stylized ensemble of harp, guitar, and woodwind that follow the sentimental violin solo. Later, the addition of the mandolin distances it yet further from European art music, anticipating the exoticism of *Das Lied von der Erde* in which Mahler was soon to reuse it. To be sure, this is a character piece, of which there are plenty of examples in Mahler's earlier symphonies and songs, but the degree of its artifice is curiously at odds with the symphonic context in which it is placed, not least that it follows immediately from one of Mahler's most macabre and darkest scherzos.

These movements are presented as pieces of musical make-believe but are always self-conscious about their own status. They undermine their own pastiche with inappropriate harmonic and contrapuntal subtlety and unexpected changes of musical voice. The abruptness of mood change, from nonchalant to urgent, from sentimental to desperate, has a rather unnerving effect, quite at odds with the idea of a serenade. As is so often the case in Mahler, the fabrication of the discourse is revealed in the ending, as the constituent elements fragment, like a machine falling apart, leaving only dismembered parts on the workbench. This capacity of the music to reveal its own construction is uncanny, in the sense that Hoffmann's tales are uncanny, none more so than those that blur the boundaries between the human and the mechanical.

# 4

## Plural Voices

### Carnival Humor

The *Wunderhorn* songs on which Mahler based the scherzos of the Second and Third Symphonies have very similar performance directions: “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt” is marked *Mit behaglichstem Humor*; “Ablösung im Sommer,” simply *Mit Humor*. Two more of the *Wunderhorn* songs are directed to be sung in similar fashion: “Verlorne Mühl’!” is marked *Mit Humor*, and “Starke Einbildungskraft” is marked *mit humoristischem Ausdruck*. The term *Humor* also recurs in the relatively few comments we have from Mahler about his own music. He said that the *Wunderhorn* songs employed *Humor* “in the best and truest sense of the word”<sup>1</sup> and on another occasion referred to the “rather bitter-sweet humour” of both “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt” and “Das Himmlische Leben.”<sup>2</sup> In a letter, he described his Third Symphony as “my most mature and individual work, and full of humour”;<sup>3</sup> more specifically, he described the Scherzo thus to Natalie Bauer-Lechner: “The piece is really a sort of face-pulling and tongue-poking on the part of all Nature. But there is such a gruesome, Panic humour in it that one is more likely to be overcome by horror than laughter.”<sup>4</sup> On another occasion, she reports, Mahler “called Beethoven the father and true founder of humour” in music.<sup>5</sup>

The *Wunderhorn* songs were certainly read by Mahler’s contemporaries in terms of their *Humor* but were not necessarily any more welcome for that. To Theodor Helm the “folk-like (or at least purportedly folk-like) old fashioned, even child-like melodies” were possible only as a “grotesque musical humor,”<sup>6</sup> and Paul Bekker referred to Mahler’s “woodcutter’s humor, which enjoyed juxtaposing bizarre, quaint worlds (an enthusiasm for folk song) with the pathos of grand tragedy (bold march rhythms).”<sup>7</sup> “It is,” Bekker maintained, “a rustic and burlesque kind of humor; refined wit and irony recede into populist coarseness. Paradoxical though it sounds, it may not be wrong to say that in Mahler an operetta composer was lost.”<sup>8</sup> Federico Celestini underlines that, at one time or another, Mahler used the term *Humoreske* to describe most of the *Wunderhorn* songs, the third movement of the First Symphony, the third movement of the Second, the first, third, and fifth

movements of the Third and the Fifth Symphony.<sup>9</sup> A programmatic sketch for the Fourth Symphony gives it the subtitle *Humoreske*,<sup>10</sup> an element clearly preserved in the Finale of the completed work, though James L. Zychowicz insists that the title *Humoreske* refers to its free attitude toward formal types rather than connoting something comical.<sup>11</sup> Schumann seems to have been the first to use the term *Humoreske* as the title of a musical work (for his Op. 20, in 1839), though Mahler may well have encountered Carl Löwe's *Fünf Humoresken* for male voice quartet (1843) and Humperdinck's *Humoreske* for orchestra (1879).<sup>12</sup>

What light is shed on this term by the songs to which Mahler applied it? All four have in common a bare and largely two-part texture and are characterized by peremptory simplicity and exaggerated repetition of melodic motifs and/or ostinato figures. This they share with at least five other *Wunderhorn* songs: "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen," "Trost im Unglück," "Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?!" "Lob des hohen Verstands," and "Aus! Aus!" All of these imply the performance direction *Mit Humor* even though Mahler does not use it here. The *Humor* of the poems is underlined by the qualities of the music; pretension and deception are both exposed by the exaggerated repetitions of simple materials as much as by the unexpected harmonic twists to which Mahler subjects them. In "Trost im Unglück" the bare fourths and fifths, the avoidance of any melody that might denote a lyrical subject, and with it the absence of any counterpoint or any development is presented as humorous in itself; m. 18 is marked *possierlich* (funny), presumably because the off-beat accents force the singer to sound rather like an accordion. But the song as a whole, like "Verlorne Müh'!" and "Starke Einbildungskraft," seems humorous largely because of its sharply drawn cartoon of particular characters and their comic situations.

The scherzos of the Second and Third Symphonies amplify some of these elements while at the same time exploring what *Humor* might be in instrumental music, without the suggestion of a poetic text. Both emphasize the particularity of individual orchestral voices, especially those of the woodwind. In the Second, the most prominent of these is the E flat clarinet, whose turn with the running ostinato figure (marked *mit Humor*) is distorted in pitch and register. This is only the most extreme of the use of specific woodwind characters. The introductory bars emphasize the timbre of the contra-bassoon and the cor anglais, which contribute to a nonhomogeneity of sonority emphasized by the rhythmic tapping of the *Ruthe* (a switch), and the ostinato figure is subsequently taken up by a pair of clarinets and a pair of flutes that spiral out of harmonic control. The Third makes similar use of individual woodwind timbres with the E flat clarinet again prominent and registral extremes foregrounded (here the piccolo, particularly). The heterogeneity of the woodwind relates to both Mahler's evocation of the creatures of the forest (given in the absent song text) and his fondness for imitating the rude ensemble of village bands (the offbeat articulations have a humorous effect here as they do in "Trost im Unglück"). In both movements a focus on the character of individual sounds produces passages of divertimento-like music. In the Second [Fig. 38] this makes a

rather overt reference to Bach; in the Third [Fig. 12], it relates more to the fairy-tale unreality of Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The similarity of these two movements, however, extends beyond matters of orchestration to formal and aesthetic parallels. Both are marked by episodic changes of character in which sectional divisions are marked by sudden but brief *fortissimo* outbursts (in the Second Symphony, Figs. 32, 34, 44, 47, and, in the Third Symphony, Figs. 9 and 23). This sectional nature, congruent with the Minuet and Trio form on which the movements are based, nevertheless gives way to a late moment of structural breakthrough quite out of keeping with that formal model. Marked by brass fanfares, string pedals, and sweeping harp glissandi [Fig. 50 in II/3 and Fig. 31 in III/3], these passages take on the character of structural anticipations usually associated with Finales. Both movements also foreground passages of more lyrical music, given prominently by the trumpet in the Second [Fig. 40] and the flügelhorn in the Third Symphony [Fig. 14] (the post horn episode).

Such passages seem a long way from the simple *Humor* of the *Wunderhorn* songs on which these orchestral movements are based. To understand the relationship between the two, and thus to understand better the term *Humor*, one needs to go back to Mahler's own sources. He undoubtedly borrowed the term from Schumann, who, in turn, drew on the work of both E. T. A. Hoffmann and Jean Paul Richter. I will return to both, and the link between their fictional works and Mahler's music, in chapter 6, but for now I want to concentrate on Jean Paul's definition of *Humor* as set out in a substantial part of his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804). What this makes clear is that Mahler's overt use of the term is merely the outer edge of a far larger category of his music, which it designates and which relates directly to his metaphysical concerns.

Jean Paul defines *Humor* as "the inverted sublime" because it makes visible the contrast between the finite, everyday world of individual things and people and the infinitude of the world of spirit and ideas. It does so not by attempting directly to represent something infinite (as in the romantic sublime), but by focusing on the immediate, sensuous, and particular as foil to the idea of the infinite. By exposing the limits of the merely finite world, Jean Paul argues, the humorist reveals its inadequacy and thereby projects a sense of the infinite.<sup>13</sup> He cites the case of the satirist Jonathan Swift, who "at the end of his life preferred both to read and to compose bad works, because in this concave mirror foolish finitude, the enemy of the idea, appeared to him most tattered."<sup>14</sup> He goes on to cite two further literary examples. In Ludwig Tieck's *Zerbino*, he says, "the dramatis personae finally believe themselves to be merely fictive non-entities, thus drawing the audience themselves onto the stage and the stage under the press-jack." In Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, the author "several times speaks lengthily and reflectively about certain incidents, until in the end, he concludes: 'All the same, 'tis not a word of it true.'"<sup>15</sup> He relates this idea of *Humor* specifically to music. "Something similar to the audacity [*Keckheit*] of annihilating humor, an expression of scorn for the world, can be perceived in a

good deal of music, like that of Haydn, which destroys entire tonal sequences by introducing an extraneous key and storms alternately between pianissimo and fortissimo, presto and andante.”<sup>16</sup>

There are so many points of contact with Mahler's music in these few lines from Jean Paul that it is hard to know where to begin. The idea of *Humor* as “the inverted sublime” is perhaps the key to understanding the recurrent juxtapositions of high and low, of profound and vulgar, metaphysical and worldly that so shocked Mahler's contemporaries. The worldliness of Mahler's music, its concern with the individual in all its particularity, is the flipside of its otherworldliness, its longing for transcendence and the ideal. Mahler's *Wunderhorn* songs, and the orchestral movements derived from them, embody Jean Paul's insistence on “comic individuation,” that is, that *Humor* demands the sensuousness of the particular: “Shakespeare is never more individual, than in comic scenes” Jean Paul insisted, whereas “the serious always emphasizes the general.”<sup>17</sup> The same principle underlies the difference between the utmost particularity of Mahler's scherzos and *Wunderhorn* songs, marked by highly individuated and therefore fragmentary orchestration, and the choric sonority of the grand Adagio movements. A comparison of the Scherzo and Adagio Finale from the Third Symphony would illustrate the point at once. Mahler's famous statement to Sibelius that, for him, the symphony “must include the whole world” is born out not so much by the sublime and universal voice to which his works aspire, but by the bizarre catalog of diverse voices, characters, and instrumental sonorities embraced by his music. Mahler's world is often like that of Brueghel for this reason, because similarly populated by an apparently infinite array of disparate figures, both real and imaginary.

According to Jean Paul, the source of this particularity is, in the first instance, the comic artist himself: “For every humorist the self plays the first role; when he can, he even introduces his personal circumstances upon the comic stage, although he does so only to annihilate it poetically. The humorist is both his own court jester or quartet of masked Italian comedians and at the same time their prince and director.”<sup>18</sup> Mahler was indeed just such a comic artist, from his earliest songs to which he wrote his own texts alluding to events of his own life (masquerading as folk texts) to his final unfinished symphony grounded in the painful particularity of his own marital crisis of 1910. His own insistence that the first two symphonies were related directly to his own life, coupled with the “poetic annihilation” of their subject through the *Humor* of his scherzo movements, aligns him directly with Jean Paul. His life provided the material for the performances of his own commedia dell'arte, in which he was simultaneously both player and director.<sup>19</sup> Natalie Bauer-Lechner reports him reflecting on just this: “The Bohemian music of my childhood home has found its way into many of my compositions. I've noticed it especially in the ‘Fischpredigt.’ The underlying national element there can be heard in its most crude and basic form, in the tootling of the Bohemian pipers.”<sup>20</sup> One might add to Mahler's own example, the

mit *Parodie* section of the third movement of the First Symphony, where Mahler's mock-serious burial of his autobiographical hero is interrupted by the grim humor of a Bohemian band.

The metaphor that Jean Paul applies to Swift, of looking at life through a concave mirror, the better to see the tattered nature of the mundane, is adopted directly by Mahler and specifically in relation to the scherzo of the Second Symphony. He described it to Natalie thus: "The experience of the Scherzo I can describe only in terms of the following image: if, at a distance, you watch a dance through a window, without being able to hear the music, then the turning and twisting of the couples seems senseless, because you are not catching the rhythm that is the key to it all. You must imagine that to one who has lost his identity and his happiness, the world looks like this—distorted and crazy, as if reflected in a concave mirror."<sup>21</sup> A number of suggestions have been made for the origin of Mahler's image, chief among them the scene in Eichendorff's *Ahnung und Gegenwart* where the character Leontin stands in a garden at night, watching dancers inside through a window.<sup>22</sup> Many commentators have pointed to an apparent quotation (at Fig. 54 of Mahler's scherzo) of the closing bars of Schumann's song "Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen" (from *Dichterliebe*), in which Heine's text evokes a scene very similar to that from Eichendorff's novella.<sup>23</sup> Jean Paul's use of the concave mirror reflects a more general fascination with the idea of clear and distorted vision in early romantic literature, and Mahler may just as well have encountered it elsewhere. But the parallel between Jean Paul's account of Swift and Mahler's concern with the vulgar in the Scherzo of the Second Symphony is striking; the text to "Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" focuses on the unruly crowd that makes up the community of fishes to which St. Anthony attempts to preach. As Jean Paul suggests of Swift, that in the end he preferred "bad" works because they better exposed the inadequacy of the finite, so Mahler cultivated in such songs the primitive, vulgar, clichéd, and banal. Federico Celestini points to one of the reasons that Mahler's *Humor* was shocking by underlining that musical *Humor* reverses the effect of its literary form. In music, reality is not the norm subsequently transcended by the poetic but rather the opposite; for this reason the evocation of an element of "reality" in the absolute art of music comes as a shocking trivialization.<sup>24</sup> Julius Korngold, writing of the Seventh Symphony in 1909, objected to exactly that in Mahler's music: "He is inclined to successions of notes that sound too affable and too popular, possessing little in the way of noble character. These he dresses up minimally or not at all; rather, with an often conscious tendency towards realism, he squeezes them into the symphony, wearing their street or working clothes."<sup>25</sup>

Later in the *Vorschule* Jean Paul asked, "How is the low comic to be represented without vulgarity? I answer, only through verse."<sup>26</sup> Not coincidentally, it was through the metrical regularity of the folk songs and dances evoked by the *Wunderhorn* poetry that Mahler introduced such elements into his own music, both as songs



and as purely instrumental movements. Similarly, Jean Paul's reference to Tieck and Sterne as examples of authorial intrusion into their own narratives, undermining the self-sufficiency of their works in order to underline their fictive quality, finds powerful corollary in Mahler's music. In the *Wunderhorn* songs this is most often given by the ways in which the song is presented not as a real folk song or dance but framed as a deliberate re-creation or staged performance of one. Even Jean Paul's use of the term *Keckheit* (audacity) recurs in Mahler's music, as both a performance direction and a material category. The setting of "Es sungen drei Engel" that appears as the fifth movement of the Third Symphony is given there as *Lustig im Tempo und keck im Ausdruck*, a combination also found in the early song "Maitanz im Grünen," which is marked *Lustig und keck*. The song "Aus! Aus!" is directed to be performed in a *keckes Marschtempo*, and the direction *keck* appears prominently in the scherzos of both the Fifth and Ninth symphonies and at the start of "Der Trunkene im Frühling" (in all three cases associated with the horn).

In his discussion of *Humor*, Jean Paul found a rich example of the "inverted sublime" in the idea of the carnivalesque. "A third analogy appears in the humorous feasts of fools of the Middle Ages, which with a free hysteronproteron, an inner spiritual masquerade innocent of any impure purpose, reversed the worldly and the spiritual, inverted social ranks and moral values, and reduced all to one great equality and freedom of joy."<sup>27</sup> The "hysteronproteron" is a rhetorical figure of speech in which what should come first comes last, thus inverting the natural or conventional order of things. Jean Paul's terms thus overlap closely with those of Mikhail Bakhtin, whose work on literature has often been productively drawn upon in relation to Mahler's music.<sup>28</sup> Like Jean Paul, Bakhtin points to the medieval Lenterne carnival as a site for the inversion of normal social hierarchies in a theatricalization of everyday life. Carnival experience was "opposed to all that was ready-made and completed, to all pretense at immutability, sought a dynamic expression; it demanded ever-changing, playful, undefined forms" and promoted a "gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities."<sup>29</sup>

For Bakhtin, a key element of this inversion of the normal social order was a folk humor that parodied the forms of high culture, both sacred and secular. He focuses on what he calls the "Paschal laughter" of the carnival, evident in all manner of parodic liturgies, scriptures and psalms, all tolerated by the church as part of the Feast of Fools. Not only church rituals, but also parodies of debates, dialogues, and chronicles were popular, of which Erasmus's "In Praise of Folly" is an important example. This same element of inversion lies at the heart of some of Mahler's humorous *Wunderhorn* texts: the donkey judges the song of the cuckoo to be more beautiful than that of the nightingale ("Lob des hohen Verstands"), the old social order is turned over and thus renewed ("Ablösung im Sommer"), the authority of the church is roundly ignored by the crowd ("Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt"). Some songs, like "Selbstgefühl" and "Wer hat dies Lied erdacht?!" are, quite simply, the songs of fools.

Jean Paul's categories, of the carnivalesque inversion of the social order and the role of the commedia dell'arte figures, are taken up in an opera that prefigures Mahler in fascinating ways, though he never conducted it and almost certainly never heard it, Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*. Set at carnival time in sixteenth-century Rome, the first Tableau of the opera introduces the offstage merrymaking of carnival maskers as a threat to official authority (here to Balducci, the papal treasurer, who is finally pelted with flour by the revelers). In the second Tableau the key dramatic vehicle is the satirical opera being performed in the main piazza. In this opera within an opera, "the pantomime opera of King Midas with the Donkey ears," Balducci is ridiculed by the commedia figures Columbine, Harlequin, and Pasquarello. What is striking here, in relation to Mahler's symphonic music, is that the opera is performed in "dumb show," with the singers' voices being carried entirely through the orchestra. Harlequin "sings" an arietta via the cor anglais and "accompanies himself" on the lyre (harp); Pasquarello "sings" a vulgar cavatina (tuba and bass drum). The competition is won by Pasquarello's ugly singing, a reversal of the proper order of things and a triumph of idiocy mirrored exactly in Mahler's "Lob des hohen Verstands."

Berlioz differentiates the pantomime opera from his own by a pastiche of an earlier eighteenth-century style, using this as a backdrop for his own comic distortions and parodies. Balducci, angry at being ridiculed, mounts the stage in a wonderful blurring of the boundaries between fiction and reality performed within the fiction of the opera itself. Berlioz's representation of the carnival crowd in the piazza is built by means of the simultaneity of different groups, represented by fragments of dance rhythms, fanfares, and busy counterpoint. This is a long way from the unity (or binary oppositions) of Verdi's crowds and much closer to the multiple voices of Mahler's scherzo movements or his drawing together of multiple groups in a march form, such as the first movement of the Third Symphony.

"Das himmlische Leben," and thus the Fourth Symphony, has often struck commentators both for the childlike glee with which it describes the range of good things on offer at the heavenly feast and for its raw images of slaughter. Both are key to many of the medieval liturgical parodies discussed by Bakhtin. He underlines that Rabelais' *Gargantua* begins with the cattle-slaughtering feast and includes "a detailed enumeration of all the dishes and game appearing on the table."<sup>30</sup> Rabelais is linked more generally to the category of "grotesque realism," above all through a fascination with the body and materiality. "The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity."<sup>31</sup> Mahler anticipates the cultural tensions of high and low that are repressed in early modernism by the degree to which he allows the popular, the low, the vulgar, and the carnivalesque to erupt within the hallowed forms of symphonic composition. This is not simply a matter of country dances and the overt reference

to lighter music; it also has to do with the intrusion of the bodily into the symphony, partly through the rhythm of the dance, but crucially through the physicality of orchestral sonority, often deployed in what was perceived to be a coarse manner. It is perhaps in this way that we might understand the rustic heaviness of Mahler's folk movements and indeed his curious avoidance of the erotic (curious in the context of fin de siècle Vienna). Bakhtin emphasizes that the body is not individualized in Rabelais and therefore has nothing to do with the modern, sexualized body of the individual. Mahler is often much closer to this carnivalesque festival than to the erotic, neurasthenic subjectivity of romantic music from Chopin and Liszt to Wagner, Wolf, Zemlinsky, and Schreker.

To be sure, the idea of a benign, carnivalesque anarchy in Mahler's music can certainly be overstated. His music is not itself carnivalesque because ultimately it seeks its opposite—immutability and completion—as the Finale to the Third Symphony underlines in overwhelming fashion. But Mahler's music frequently deploys the carnivalesque in the face of that aspiration toward order, which is why Jean Paul's concept of *Humor* fits better here than Bakhtin's carnivalesque. Natalie Bauer-Lechner relates an oft-quoted story about Mahler's experience of the polyphony of sounds in nature, an account that might suggest, misleadingly, that Mahler embraced the profusion of simultaneous and unintegrated difference in a manner similar to Charles Ives.<sup>32</sup> More pertinent, perhaps, is the comment she reports Mahler to have made about the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony: "The apparent confusion must, as in a Gothic cathedral, be resolved into the highest order and harmony."<sup>33</sup> It is a constitutive opposition of Mahler's music. For all Mahler's own hypersensitivity to disturbance from natural sound, the "noisiness" of his own music and its tendency toward pandemonium border at times on disorder, and the charge of mere "noise" figured frequently in contemporary criticism of his music.

In the Third Symphony the hybridity of form (within movements and in the conception of the symphony as a whole) is outward evidence of the opposition to fixed and immutable forms. This aspect has been picked up by a number of commentators. Raymond Knapp, discussing the third movement of the Third Symphony, comments: "Its 'voice' . . . is less a single voice than a multitude of voices, a heteroglossia that articulates a generalized perspective—the spirit of the forest, perhaps, or at least of its collective creatures—through a free intermingling of constituent points of awareness, echoing, interrupting, and reinterpreting each other continuously."<sup>34</sup> Knapp contrasts the post horn solo with the chattering animal life that surrounds it; a unitary voice (the world of man) thus emerges from and contrasts with the amorphous plurality of nature. He finds the same contrast between the fourth and fifth movements of the symphony: "The contrast between the worlds of these two songs recalls the contrast between poem and novel as delineated by Bakhtin: thus, from the monologic sensibilities of Nietzsche's midnight poem, we emerge into the heteroglossia of

‘Es sungen drei Engel.’”<sup>35</sup> Peter Franklin says of the fifth movement of the Third Symphony:

Its manner and role are without compare, its “humour” essential to the democratic Nietzscheanism of the whole conception. The sheer cheek of the childlike angels may have more to do with Germanic Christmas-carols than Mediterranean dances, but they would soon wreck any production of *Parsifal* (they might find a place in *Die Meistersinger*).... Along with the children, the bells and the merrily dotted march-tune, the angels speak for a matter-of-fact world of sprightliness and guttersnipe effrontery (the directions *keck* and *munter* are explicit).... The distilled essence of the Beethovenian choral finale is presented as a cheerful communal song to which anyone might contribute.<sup>36</sup>

The young Alma Schindler wrote in her diary about a performance of the First Symphony in Vienna in November 1900 (a year before her relationship with Mahler began), “certainly it’s done with talent, but with the greatest naivety and refinement, and not in the best sense of the word. An unbelievable jumble of styles—and an ear-splitting, nerve-shattering din. I had never heard anything like it. It was exhilarating, but no less irritating.”<sup>37</sup> To counteract the charge his supporters tended either to affirm the unity and consistency of his musical style or to redeem plurality and the charge of poor compositional technique by programmatic explanations. His old friend Guido Adler was one of the first to do this, rejecting in his 1914 study of the composer the pejorative connotations of “eclecticism” with its implication of a “conglomeration” of many voices and insisting that “Mahler stands on the firm soil of German culture, like the masters already cited who preceded him,” by which he referred to Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, and Brahms.<sup>38</sup> Adler emphasized the role of the *Humor* of movements like the Finale of the Fourth or the fifth movement of the Third Symphony in terms that recall Jean Paul: “When the poem combines faith and humour, as in the final movement of the Fourth, the composer makes use of humour as the basis of profound seriousness (as is characteristic of genuine, liberating humour).”<sup>39</sup>

Adler is surely correct in that Mahler’s music opens up such acoustic chaos precisely in order to redeem it in a “higher” order; the earthy rawness of the earlier movements of the Third Symphony is, in the end, absorbed into the Adagio Finale, which ends with a *gesättigten, edlen Ton* (a saturated, noble tone).<sup>40</sup> For Mahler himself, the plural and heterogeneous is a counterpart to the idea of a unitary voice that claims an authenticity in the face of the carnivalesque. But his oeuvre as a whole demonstrates that this tension is never wholly reconciled. After the close of Mahler’s finales, when the echo of their “noble tone” has been silenced, the conjunction of carnivalesque and unitary voices projected by the symphony as a whole persists. The proposition of the symphony, an aspect kept alive in the finales of the Fourth,

Fifth and Seventh symphonies, is of the concurrence of such multiple voices and the *Humor* resulting from their juxtaposition.

Bakhtin, discussing the English comic novel (i.e., Laurence Sterne, one of Mahler's favorite authors) underlines "its comic-parodic reprocessing of an encyclopedic range of conversational and literary languages." He continues in terms that might have been designed to talk about Mahler's music: "It especially makes use of 'the common language' of given social groups, spoken and written, and authorial speech moves flexibly in and out of those various languages, completely identifying with none, but keeping the boundaries shifting and ambiguous."<sup>41</sup> A Mahlerian symphony, taken individually in performance, proposes something different—that these multiple voices are, in the end, reconciled into the "noble tone" of a summative finale. But the corpus of Mahler's work, taken as a whole, lends itself to a different reading that comes closer to Bakhtin's view of Sterne: that even the "noble tone" is just another voice proposed by the symphony that moves between many, while "completely identifying with none."

## Irony and Tone

What is disconcerting in Mahler is not so much the presence of "the sublime, the sentimental, the tragic and the humorously ironic styles in art"<sup>42</sup> (as he himself distinguished them), but the way the last calls into question the other three. Mahler's term, "the humorously ironic," implies that he saw *Humor* and irony as much the same thing. Certainly, the difference between these terms, in reference to Mahler's music at least, is more a matter of degree than of substance. If a useful distinction can be made it is that where Mahler uses the term *Humor* it generally overlaps with a deliberate naïveté that, as it were, speaks for itself. Irony, on the other hand, is the product of authorial intervention, evident in the disparity between the material and its treatment. But these two strategies are not rigidly divided because both hinge on the way in which meaning is directed by tone. When someone speaks ironically, his words are not to be taken at face value. He intends something other, perhaps quite opposite, to what is said. A gap opens up between what is said (the words) and how it is said (the tone). While this is well understood in relation to language and literature, it is problematic in relation to music because what music says is already more a matter of tone than material and because that material resists the specific meaning of words. This by no means precludes musical irony, but it underlines why it is generally constructed in relation to highly conventional materials with a fixed and immediately recognized semantic reference. As Mahler demonstrates, musical irony is therefore inseparable from the use of "borrowed" and familiar materials.

To return to Mahler's simplest *Wunderhorn* songs *mit Humor*, in songs like "Starke Einbildungskraft" or "Ablösung im Sommer," the *Humor* arises entirely from

the simplicity of the material and its repetitions. The “primitive” voice works as a distancing device, a stripping back to something raw and thus outside of the *lingua franca* of a post-Wagnerian musical subjectivity. But this background, against which the song defines itself as different, is presumed almost entirely by the context of its composition; it is not a tension obviously defined within the music itself. It is this that led so often to the charge of naïveté in Mahler’s music, and it was one he anticipated himself. “He warned us beforehand that the audience would find the opening theme too old-fashioned and simple-minded,” Natalie Bauer-Lechner recorded in relation to the Fourth Symphony.<sup>43</sup>

Reception is likely to be particularly polarized where a piece offers nothing with which to contextualise its own naïveté. What was an educated audience in the 1890s meant to make, for example, of a song like “Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen,” with its nursery rhyme scheme of diminutive forms, rhyming endings, and repetitive nonsense syllables (“Es kam ein Herr zum Schlösseli / auf einem schönen Rösseli / kukukuk, kukukuk!”)? On the one hand, such songs *are* simple and apt to raise an ironic smile and no more. On the other hand, since their audience is both adult and sophisticated, their calculated primitivism might be thought to provoke a certain friction in the listener as the gap between language and meaning is highlighted. In this particular case, the apparent nursery song, sung to children, would appear to have a content *not* for children: the mother is intent on bribing the children to be good so that she can carry on with the knight while her husband is away. Remarkably, given that he was having an affair with their mother at the time, Mahler wrote this song for the children of Marion von Weber. The children, it seems, are being scolded for the deception of the adults. To English ears the repeated “kukukuk” might suggest that cuckolding is the real content of the song (though the resonance is absent in German).<sup>44</sup>

“Trost im Unglück,” though similar in every way to these songs, demonstrates that the control of tone was already of concern to Mahler. The Hussar is here characterized conventionally enough through a military topic derived from a rhythm associated with horse riding.<sup>45</sup> The introduction of a second voice, however, calls into question the authority of the first. The girl finds the Hussar merely pompous and wants nothing to do with him, a rejection Mahler stages through incremental changes of tone. She thus begins *in etwas weinerlichem Tone* (in a rather tearful tone), later becoming *immer weinerlicher* (increasingly tearful) and then suddenly *schnippisch! Mit ganz veränderten Tone* (flippant, with a quite altered tone), at which point his galloping 6/8 meter, which has hitherto alternated with her more cantabile 2/4 material, is heard in the accompaniment as a kind of rhythmic dissonance.

The materials in this song are simple and do not change; it is tone that shapes the unfolding meaning of the song, not the material as such. Of course, this is standard fare of Lieder composers and performers alike, but it is interesting to note both the extent to which Mahler depends on it for the sense of a song like “Trost im Unglück” and how far he controls the singer’s tone in his performance directions. Of course,

the subtlety of this counterpoint between model and distortion leaves the music curiously open in its signification. This was a problem for Mahler's audience and why his evocation of a *Volkston* projects an ambivalent meaning. In order to read such a song ironically its rudimentary materials must be heard not as a (nostalgic) celebration of honest rural simplicity, but as material for a musical humor that has its roots in Haydn. But the reception of these songs at face value, then and now, is evidence enough that Mahler's treatment of his materials is often deeply ambiguous. Deryck Cooke cited Richard Specht (apparently without censure) in suggesting that "in earlier centuries, such songs may have been sung in small market towns among soldiers, shepherds and peasants."<sup>46</sup> If Specht could hear these as the genuine article, without irony, why should we hear them otherwise? Certainly, in a song like "Verlorne Müh!" it can be hard to find any distance between this example and its background model. The arpeggiations of a folk vocal style, the simple internal repetitions and two-part texture of such songs, are hard to square with the idea of deformation.

In other songs, however, deformations of the simple stylistic model become more obvious. This is the principal difference between "Trost im Unglück" and a song like "Aus! Aus!" The latter is another dialogue between a departing soldier and his girlfriend in which both characters are defined by exaggeratedly conventional materials. The soldier's military material (a *Keckes Marschtempo* in E flat major) sets out with a confident four-bar phrase, but its answering phrase is extended and unexpectedly diverted to a distinctly unconfident A minor cadence. The soldier's confidence is not what it seems, neither is the lover's sadness; her answering verse is marked *kläglich* (*mit Parodie*). Her sadness is skin deep, and her suggestion of entering a convent clearly not serious. The song, as so often in Mahler, is topsy-turvy. His words are bold and confident; hers are winsome and shy, but he is the one being duped. The essence of the song's irony is underlined by the final line: "Die Lieb' ist noch nicht aus! Aus! Aus!" (Our love is not yet finished! Finished! Finished!). The comic inversion of meaning is thus achieved by means of one of the conventions of this poetic style, the repetition of the final word for (rhythmic) emphasis but with the unfortunate effect here of reversing the intended meaning.

The ending neatly complements Mahler's exaggerated and inappropriate use of generic musical conventions in order to subvert or reverse their normal meaning. In this song, the girl's answering verse picks up the Hussar's military rhythm, though it inverts the position of the semiquaver figures, cadencing first in C major and then, at the end of her couplet, in the dominant of A minor (the key to which he has already been diverted). He recommences without any modulation in his original E flat; clearly these two characters are not of the same mind, and neither are they listening to each other (Ex. 4.1). So confident is he that he launches directly into a more lyrical middle section in B major ("Trink' du ein Gläschen Wein / zur Gesundheit dein und mein!"), a kind of romance, in a very different tone but still with his dotted rhythm evident. He attempts to recover the original character and key (m. 37, leap from B to E flat) but ends up in G flat instead (m. 40) and then finally asserts a full eight-measure period

in E flat. Her final verse (about entering a convent) is too harmonically complex for this simple folk poem and the A flat minor passage too exaggerated. That he is out of touch with her is underlined by the ending; his E flat material accelerates through its final cadence with his last three exclamations of “Aus!” caught off the beat.

More often, however, Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* songs present a disjunction between the naïveté of their texts and the sophistication of their musical setting. On “Rheingendchen” Mahler commented to Natalie Bauer-Lechner: “In spite of all its simplicity and folklike quality, the whole thing is extremely original, especially in its harmonization, so that people will not know what to make of it, and will call it mannered.”<sup>47</sup> This is foregrounded in “Wer hat dies Lied erdacht?!” the very title of which underlines its self-conscious attitude to composition and to its own musical voice. The text is wonderfully self-deprecatory; the song is “found” in the noise of the geese

**Example 4.1** *Wunderhorn Lieder*, “Aus! Aus!” mm. 1–22

**Keckes Marschtempo**

The musical score is for the song "Aus! Aus!" from Mahler's *Wunderhorn Lieder*, measures 1–22. It is in E-flat major (three flats) and 2/4 time, marked "Keckes Marschtempo". The score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Heu- te marschie-ren wir! Juch- he, juch he, im- grü nen\_Mai! Mor- gen mar-schie-ren wir zu dem ho - hen\_ Tor hin aus, zum". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated pattern in the left hand. The vocal line is simple and rhythmic, following the melody of the piano accompaniment.

(continued)



**Example 4.1** Continued

9 *p* kläglich (mit parodie)

ho- henTor hin- aus! Aus!" "Reis'st du denn schon fort? Je, - je! Mein

14

Lieb-ster! Kommst nie-mals wie - der heim? Je! - Je! Mein Lieb-ster!"

19 *f* keck

"Heu - temar - shie-ren wir, juch he, juch he, im - grü- nen Mai!

(Mahler's orchestration of the song has clarinet and oboe at this point). But the song is also self-critical by means of its deliberate stylistic exaggeration, notably of the melismatic line that concludes stanzas and the over-repetition of simple folk materials (e.g., mm. 81–87).<sup>48</sup> But simple materials are submitted to complex harmonic treatment (e.g., mm. 47–67) where rapid shifts of key effect quick changes of tone. The humor of this passage derives from the sense that the singer gets carried away and ends up overstepping himself, just as he does in the drawn-out melismatic passages (Ex. 4.2). The latter might suggest a baroque model except that the obvious disjunction between this foolish song and its pretension to such a style is part of the humor. Mahler makes this disjunction literal: in mm. 37–41 the harmonic sequence evokes a baroque, perhaps even Bachian, texture, but thereafter (mm. 42–44) the vocal melisma gets out of step with the bass line (even more clearly the second time, mm. 85–91) and keys are abruptly juxtaposed: A major with F major, and D flat major with A major.

**Example 4.2** *Wunderhorn Lieder*, “Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?!” mm. 33–50

The musical score for Example 4.2 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 33 to 41, and the second system covers measures 39 to 50. The vocal line is written in a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass). The key signature changes frequently, reflecting the complex harmonic treatment mentioned in the text. The vocal line includes the lyrics "Es woh-net auf grü - ner Hai". The piano accompaniment features intricate patterns, including rapid shifts in key and texture. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano) and *poco a poco cresc.* (poco a poco crescendo). The score is marked with measure numbers 33, 39, and 50.

(continued)

**Example 4.2** *Continued*

45 de! Mein Herz le - is' - wundt! Komm', Schätzle mach's g'sund!

*p*

In Mahler's last pair of *Wunderhorn* songs the control of tone is allied to deformation through exaggeration to create a biting ironic tone unprecedented in his music. "Der Tambour'ssell" is marked *Mit naivem Vortrag, ohne Sentimentalität*. Well aware that such naive materials could easily turn into sentimental kitsch, deploying them to create something altogether more edgy and macabre was a risky strategy. Mahler's detailed markings for the voice underline his anxiety that performance should capture the right tone: *steigernd, mit Grausen, mit sehr erhabner Stimme, schreiend, mit verhaltenem Ton, mit brechender Stimme*.<sup>49</sup> The power of tone is central to "Revelge," where the singer's onomatopoeic imitation of the fanfare ("Tralali, tralaley") becomes ironically expressive entirely through repetition and tone. The voice here is deformed by its complete identification with military rhythms and triadic fanfare shapes; it mounts an opposition only in the *klagende* phrases that work against the empty jollity of the "Tralali" and noisy band intrusions. In the same way, the lyrical passage beginning "Ach Bruder" protests against the unfeeling nature of the march. The materials are unambiguously borrowed—collective, social, and unoriginal—but they are pressed into expressive intensity through harmonic distortion, exaggeration of line, orchestration and the unremitting rhythm.

Part of the expressive intensity arises precisely from the unrelenting quality of the accompaniment and its refusal of any consolation. In "Tambour'ssell" a central orchestral episode mounts a kind of protest to the unfolding horror of the story, with the tone of cello and cor anglais prominently in the melodic line. But no such voice is heard in "Revelge"; on the contrary, it is the absence of any expressive voice that creates the expression of the piece. The vocal part is marked *geschrieen* at one point (m. 127), and the woodwinds are frequently directed to play fortissimo with their bells up to achieve a particularly harsh sound (the oboe's fanfare motif in m. 136 is marked *grell schreiend* as well as bells up). Federico Celestini cites "Revelge" as an example of Mahler's deconstruction of convention through exaggeration to

the extent that the opposite effect is achieved. The force of the irony is such, he argues, that any sense of lyrical identity is erased and “Revelge” thus becomes a song in which the singer presents an “absent voice”—a musical subject that has been literally and figuratively annihilated.<sup>50</sup>

These two songs anticipate the construction of an ironic voice in Mahler’s later scherzos. In those of the Sixth, Seventh, and Ninth symphonies in particular, Mahler leaves the *Humor* of the Second and Third far behind. The difference is marked by the degree to which the later movements foreground the gap between material and tone, between what is presented and how. Robert Samuels makes a useful distinction between parody (as distortion) and irony (as opposition).<sup>51</sup> Alain Leduc proposes three kinds of irony in Mahler, effectively by dividing the idea of irony as opposition: the parodistic (e.g., “Lob des hohen Verstands” and “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt”); the critical (the scherzos, waltzes, Ländler, and moto perpetuo movements); the tragic (the funeral march of the First Symphony, “Das irdische Leben,” and the first song of the *Kindertotenlieder*).<sup>52</sup> Stephen E. Hefling proposes six categories: parody, ingenue irony, tragic dramatic irony, ironic ambivalence, bitter incongruity, ironic nostalgia.<sup>53</sup> Of course, the closer one gets to individual songs and movements, the more discrete categories give way to the particularity of tone in each instance. Esti Sheinberg breaks down the concept of irony into two principal categories: satirical irony (which aims to promote a nonsatirical message or viewpoint) and nonsatirical irony. This second category, which she aligns with the idea of romantic irony, nevertheless breaks down into three distinct modes: (i) the deliberate distancing of the artist from his work, as in Hoffmann or Sterne; (ii) a process of “infinite negation” without proposing that any option might be preferred (as in Kierkegaard); (iii) a process of “infinite creation” characterized by “the acceptance of coexisting incongruities,” as in Bakhtin’s ideas of “unfinalizability” and “heteroglossia.”<sup>54</sup>

What Samuels defines as opposition may perhaps be located in those songs and orchestral movements of Mahler that undermine, rather than simply exaggerate, the models on which they are based. The dance forms on which Mahler’s scherzos are built imply affirmative and collective movements, based on strong metrical schemes, repetitive rhythmic figures, and clear, sectional orchestration. The Ländler movements of Bruckner symphonies or Brahms’ excursions into folk idioms provide different examples of such a model. But the tendency to collapse, fragmentation, and dissolution of the musical voice in Mahler’s scherzos, contradicts such assumptions. The Scherzo of the Seventh Symphony provides an extreme example of this. It begins by a gradual piecing together of musical fragments and ends by allowing them once again to fall apart. While the movement is contrapuntal throughout, its web of voices avoids consolidation into any clear statement.<sup>55</sup> The musical surface is marked by rapid changes of veiled and unintegrated orchestral sonorities, including foregrounded roles for the tuba, the double bass, and solo viola [Figs. 121, 126, 148, 161.4ff.]. This dissolving web of musical fragments and

ungraspable voices runs contrary to the most basic assumptions of the dance form that appears to generate it.

If the Third Symphony comes close to Sheinberg's category of "infinite creation," manifest in the heteroglossia of its musical characters, the Scherzo of the Seventh unfolds itself through "infinite negation." It negates the waltz model on which it is built through a constant disruption of its meter; it negates the idea of musical voice through fragmentation of orchestration and motif, confining itself mostly to veiled sonorities and scurrying, unindividuated figures; and it negates the periodic units implied by the form through moments of sudden eruption and collapse [e.g., Fig. 114]. The evocation of a Viennese waltz in the style of Johann Strauss [Fig. 118] is presented in order to be negated.<sup>56</sup> Its hallmark figure, the ascending sixth, becomes painfully distorted by intervallic exaggeration in the four measures leading to Fig. 120, underlined by the use of glissandi (Ex. 4.3). The same registral displacement is used again after Fig. 127. The grotesque effect of this device is picked up by what follows, Mahler's foregrounding of "dispossessed voices"; the double basses at Fig. 121, framed by bassoon, contra-bassoon, tuba, and timpani, have a figure distorted by a dynamic swell that makes it lurch forward like a drunkard. At Fig. 126 it becomes a countersubject to the main waltz theme.

**Example 4.3** Seventh Symphony, third movement, Fig. 118

118

Bassoon

Horns in F

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

(continued)

Example 4.3 Continued

119

Bsn.

Hns.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*pp*

*spring. Bog.*

*pp*

*spring. Bog.*

*pp*

*sf*

*sf*

*p*

*sfp*

*sfp*

*p*

*pp*

*A-Saite*

*pp*

*3*

*3*

*3*

*3*

(continued)

## Example 4.3 Continued

120

Ob. *sfp* 3 3 3 3

Cl. *sfp* 3 3 3 3

Bsn. *sfp* 3 3 3 3

Hns. *sf* *p*

Timp. *p*

Vln. I *sf* *p*

Vln. II *sf* *p*

Vc. *pizz.* *p*

Db. *pizz.* *p*

The entire movement is characterized by fragments of strained and distorted lyrical voices, momentarily breaking the surface of a collective dance that anticipates the music of Alban Berg. But lyrical expression, often marked *klagend* or divided between unlikely voices (solo viola, tuba, double bass), leads only to collapse. At Fig. 161 the woodwinds are marked *kreischend* (screaming); their protest is cut off by one of Mahler's most violent hammer blows—a pizzicato in the cellos and basses (*ffff*), with the direction "Pluck so hard that the strings hit the wood." The return of the main material afterward includes a parody (in the trombones and tuba, Fig. 163.3) of the lyrical theme heard earlier in the horns and cellos but otherwise from here to the end the movement is shaped by radical fragmentation of the musical material and texture.

Henry-Louis de La Grange relates the Scherzo of the Seventh to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and finds in both a quality of savage caricature that anticipates the Rondo Burlesque of the Ninth Symphony.<sup>57</sup> For all that the latter movement may be "virtuosically sarcastic," however,<sup>58</sup> it differs from these earlier examples in that its negativity is interrupted by anticipatory premonitions of the theme of the Adagio Finale. Taken as a whole, therefore, the Rondo Burlesque might embody Sheinberg's idea of a nonsatirical irony, that is, one that deploys negativity in order to propose an

alternative voice, as indeed one might argue the Seventh Symphony as a whole does, given the apparently affirmative Finale in relation to the negativity of the Scherzo. No such affirmation is made in the Sixth Symphony, however, a difference that makes very significant Mahler's indecision about the ordering of the Scherzo and the lyrical Andante. The Scherzo of the Sixth does have an alternative Trio voice to contrast with the unremitting negativity of its opening section, but the *Altväterisch* material heard first at Fig. 56 is framed as being so distant that its air of unreality has the effect of making the violent "present" that surrounds it all the more powerful.

In attempting to define the category of the grotesque, the literary critic Philip Thomson points to the incompatible reactions caused by the gap between the presented content and the manner of its presentation, locating the root of its power in this incongruity, one both comic and monstrous. As with *Humor*, this is rooted in a relation to the real: "Far from possessing a necessary affinity with the fantastic, the grotesque derives at least some of its effect from being presented within a realistic framework, in a realistic way."<sup>59</sup> This is exactly what we see in Mahler's ironic music that depends for its effect on the distortion of conventional materials drawn from the real world of social dances, marches, and songs. The grotesque is encountered as an "estranged or alienated world" but one that arises precisely when "the familiar world is seen from a perspective which suddenly renders it strange (... this strangeness may be either comic or terrifying, or both)."<sup>60</sup>

But Mahler's ironic tone has many borders. It slides into the grotesque in one direction but into sentimentality in another. The ease with which Mahler moves between them draws out the highly mobile and unstable nature of his musical signifiers—above all, musical tone itself. Mahler's sentimentality lies somewhere between naïveté and irony; the blurring of the boundaries between them is the root of his frequently ambivalent tone.<sup>61</sup> This is a dangerous game because the sentimental thus moves between, on the one hand, the claim of authentic expression and, on the other hand, the ironic annihilation of expression that becomes empty gesture and cliché. To argue about whether something is or is not sentimental in Mahler therefore is rather to miss the point; his music projects a disturbing ambivalence as an element of its own self-questioning. As Pierre Boulez commented: "First of all we are put off by a seeming dilemma: the borderline between sentimentality and irony, nostalgia and criticism which is sometimes impossible to define."<sup>62</sup> Mahler's critics were no less perplexed and regularly included the charge of "sentimentality" as part of the usual catalog of his musical failings. Maximilian Muntz was not untypical in dismissing the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony as "shallow sensual sentimentality,"<sup>63</sup> a good example of critics having to take the opposite view to the audience. Richard Strauss, who had conducted the 1905 performance at which Muntz was present, echoed this idea when he wrote to Mahler: "Your Fifth Symphony again gave me great pleasure in the full rehearsal, a pleasure only slightly dimmed by the little Adagietto. But as this was what pleased the audience most, you are getting what you deserve."<sup>64</sup> The Andante of the Sixth Symphony met with similar criticism. James Buhler has shown



how critics have always balked at the presumed sentimentality of its main theme.<sup>65</sup> He quotes Hans Redlich as saying: "The Andante's chief melody with the disarming sentimentality of its initial up-beat derives much from the tradition of lesser Romantics like Flotow, Kircher and Lassen."<sup>66</sup> Robert Hirschfeld suggested something similar in 1907, adding that it was reminiscent of "a salon piece." Paul Bekker wrote of the Andante's Lied-like melody that it was "almost ironizingly popular" and went on: "One may assume that Mahler himself took no real pleasure in this theme.... Was it perhaps the intention to give the opening melody a particularly worldly sound in order to make the subsequent forgetting of everything earthly, of everything bound to the material, even more clearly noticeable?"<sup>67</sup>

Bekker is surely led by an interpretative agenda here rather than his ears; even a critic, one hopes, can stand aloof from the music only after the event. Part of the subtle power of such a Mahlerian melody is precisely that it draws us in, makes us complicit in its lyrical earnestness in which we want to believe, even at the risk of sentimentality. We trust the composer to steer a course between heartfelt feeling and sentimentality but are thus caught in moments of musical ambivalence. Bekker's interpretation of the "triviality" of the theme as expressing "lack and displacement" is thus too one-sided, a case of being wise after the event.<sup>68</sup> It downplays the extent to which the melody beguiles us with a wistful beauty we want to be true. Being critically "superior" about musical triviality and sentimentality, rejecting the longing that the music induces in spite of one's critical acumen, is to miss part of the music's power. James Buhler nevertheless suggests that the Andante contains just such an element of self-critique. Picking up on Hirschfeld's comment about its salon aspect, Buhler reads this as acknowledging the way in which Mahler creates a distancing effect such that it becomes "a staging of domestic tranquility as seen from outside." This he relates directly to Mahler's metaphor of watching dancers through a window as applied to the Scherzo of the Second Symphony.

The question does not dissolve into contingent questions of reception and interpretation, however, since there is a difference between those passages that critics *heard* as sentimental and those that Mahler deliberately *frames* as such.<sup>69</sup> It is not impossible to identify the musical means by which Mahler achieves the latter. The Trio of the Scherzo to the First Symphony provides an early example. After the collective rustic scene of the Ländler, the Trio functions like a shift to closer camera work (Ex. 4.4). This more intimate tableau is marked as sentimental in several ways. The falling sixth figures in the violins (in rustic parallel thirds) are marked *gliss[ando]*, as is the answering upward sixth heard two bars later in the viola. The lazy sliding along the string is reinforced by the directions *Ja, nicht eilen* and *Zeit lassen*—not so much instructions not to hurry as to take time, to hang back, to loiter. The melodic simplicity of the first eight-bar period contrasts with the chromatic detail of the extension phrase that follows it. *This* is musical sentimentality, if not kitsch: a harmonic gilding of the melodic lily and an over-ornamented and inflected delaying of the cadence to the answering phrase.



**Example 4.4** *Continued*

The musical score for Example 4.4 Continued features the following staves and markings:

- Fl.**: First staff, featuring a melodic line with an accent (^) and the marking *espress.*
- Ob.**: Second staff, featuring a melodic line with an accent (^).
- Cl.**: Third staff, featuring a melodic line with an accent (^) and the marking *p*.
- Vln. I**: Fourth staff, featuring a melodic line with a glissando (*gliss.*) and the marking *p*.
- Vln. II**: Fifth staff, featuring a melodic line with a glissando (*gliss.*) and the marking *geth.*
- Vla.**: Sixth staff, featuring a melodic line with an accent (^) and the marking *p*.
- Vc.**: Seventh staff, featuring a melodic line with an accent (^) and the marking *p*.
- Db.**: Eighth staff, featuring a melodic line with a pizzicato (*pizz.*) and the marking *p*.

*(continued)*

A similar contrast is made in the Scherzo of the Second Symphony: the choice of the trumpet to “sing” this wistful melody [Fig. 40, *sehr ausdrucksvoll gesungen*] over the harp’s arpeggiation creates a gap between the implied vocal model and the realization. At its return [Fig. 42] it is marked *portamento*, while the delicate lines in the strings include wistful glissandi between their sustained notes. The tempo marking *Zeit lassen* is used for the violin version of this melody when it returns at Fig. 52. Both this tempo marking and the portamento instruction are associated with the wistful post horn episode in the Scherzo of the Third Symphony [Fig. 14.9 and 14.20]. Both elements are condensed into the opening four-bar violin phrase that frames successive sections of the second *Nachtmusik* in the Seventh Symphony, a paradigmatic statement of distanced sentimentality. An even more condensed version is heard in the simple upbeat into the main melody that opens the Fourth Symphony. The 1st Violin’s simple ascent from D to the tonic G is marked *etwas zurückhaltend* and concludes with the smallest of portamenti from the F sharp to the G. The wistful unreality of the movement, caught in that single gesture, is later expanded in the aching extensions of the arpeggio figure in the cellos [Fig. 7] with

## Example 4.4 Continued

The musical score for Example 4.4 Continued features the following instruments and parts:

- Fl. (Flute):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *pp* dynamic marking and a glissando.
- Ob. (Oboe):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *pp* dynamic marking and a glissando.
- Cl. (Clarinet):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *p* dynamic marking and a triplet.
- Bsn. (Bassoon):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *p* dynamic marking and a triplet.
- Hns. (Horns):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *p* dynamic marking and a triplet.
- Vln. I (Violin I):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *gliss.* marking and a *pp* dynamic marking.
- Vln. II (Violin II):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *gliss.* marking and a *pp* dynamic marking.
- Vla. (Viola):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *gliss.* marking and a *pp* dynamic marking.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *pp* dynamic marking and a triplet.
- Db. (Double Bass):** Part 1, measures 1-4. Includes a *pp* dynamic marking and a triplet.

their glissandi over more than an octave, further exaggerated still on the return of this section in the recapitulation [Fig. 23.9ff.].<sup>70</sup>

In Mahler, *Humor*, naïveté, irony, and sentimentality become overlapping modalities of the musical voice. As he predicted, they bewildered and even angered his critics while at the same time, as Strauss underlined, pleased the audience. It is key to Mahler's musical identity and the historical position of his music that what was at first heard in terms of lack of originality, false simplicity, and deliberate archaicism became, within a decade, hallmarks of a musical modernism shared by devotees like Alban Berg as much as more distant figures such as Igor Stravinsky. The ironic consciousness may not be an exclusively modern phenomenon—earlier art and music is not without examples of linguistic self-consciousness—but the romantic irony that Mahler reactivates in his music is tied directly to the outwardly more radical self-critique of musical language of twentieth-century modernism.

**Example 4.5** Fifth Symphony, third movement, Fig. 6

**6** *Etwas ruhiger*

Bassoon

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

*p*

*pizz.*

*die Hälfte*

*arco*

*pp*

**6**

Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*p*

*pp*

*pizz.*

*arco*

*get.*

*p*

*pp*

(continued)

**Example 4.5** *Continued*

11

Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pizz.

get.

p

arco

mf

arco

pp

Tutti pizz.

mf

pp

sf

pp

**Borrowed Voices**

It will be observed...that some critics find in Mahler's Fifth Symphony resemblances to Brahms, Bruckner, Verdi, d'Indy, Strauss and Wagner. The chronicler of the *Evening Sun* calls attention to Mahler's copying of Bach, Tchaikovsky, and Puccini. Harold Bauer says that the slow movement reminds him of Beethoven. The present writer sets down his opinion that the scherzo brought memories of Loeffler, Liszt, and Saint-Saens. Is there no one to say that any part of the symphony sounds like Mahler? Criticism is so charitable.

—Leonard Leibling, *Music Courier*, February 21, 1906

I understand: so capable an artist must simply have had the delightful idea of writing a satire of the symphony. Mahler's amusing parody of the symphonic spirit and form...a delightful and entirely successful parody of symphonic composers who borrow rather than create and who do not allow even one atom of their own selves to enter the symphonic form but instead draw together what their ears have taken in.

—Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 20, 1900

Taken individually, not one of the motives is truly original. There are nowhere any musical ideas that are immediately understood to be those of a creative genius. But one of the strangest phenomena in the history of art is the manner in which Mahler's strong personality shapes these everyday motives and impresses a strong, individual stamp on them so that they are suddenly set into relief and acquire character. This

process is no sham. It springs from an almost demonic will to impose one's own self onto things, perhaps from a disdain for the objectivity of the world—which for Mahler gains value and relevance only when it begins to live in his subjectivity.

—Richard Batka, *Prager Tagblatt*, September 20, 1908

Mahler...belongs to that class of composers who lack a language of their own and therefore speak in many.

—Paul Bekker, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, May, 1911

Mahler's music was often criticized for its bewildering changes of tone and manner; it was also frequently attacked for its apparently derivative and unoriginal nature.<sup>71</sup> It was not that Mahler used familiar materials as such but that he seemed to do so in a deliberately parodistic and ironic way, relying on outworn gestures one moment and turning high musical materials into burlesque the next. This flew in the face of two widely cherished assumptions about art: that it should be original and that it should be sincere. Before leaping to Mahler's defense we would do well to consider these observations by Mahler's critics because they point to important aspects of the music to which the current trend to hagiography can easily desensitize us. Mahler's music is indeed full of derivative, borrowed, recycled, and worn-out materials, but the use to which they are put may strike us quite differently from how they struck his contemporaries. This is partly because modern audiences simply do not hear "borrowed" materials so acutely as did audiences in Mahler's own time, but it is also because what then appeared to show a shocking absence of originality is, to our own age, a sign of a critical self-awareness of music's linguistic conventions and their historical enervation.

It is perhaps unhelpful, if not anachronistic, to suggest that Mahler was a neo-classicist before his time.<sup>72</sup> The historicism of his music has more to do with that of the late Habsburg culture of which he was part, even if he used it to quite different ends, than with the concerns of neoclassicism after 1918. Mahler's most obvious musical borrowings, from various forms of popular music, are always employed ambivalently; the found material is treated both fondly and critically at the same time. It reflects a self-conscious attitude toward the musical past that was both in keeping with Viennese historicism at the fin de siècle but that simultaneously offended it precisely for drawing attention to it in uncomfortable ways. The recurrent charge of *Kapellmeistermusik* that Mahler had to endure from his critics is perhaps, viewed from this perspective, an expression of the bad conscience of the age. In some ways, the charge was predetermined by the fact that Mahler was known primarily as a conductor. That his own works echo with other musical voices is of course bound up with his professional life as a conductor of opera, operetta, and, eventually, orchestral music. Mahler's biography reminds us of the unrelenting round of rehearsal and performance that dominated his life from the age of twenty

until his death thirty years later. Composition took place in isolated pockets of time, consisting almost entirely of the summer breaks he was able to take between the end of one season and the start of the next.<sup>73</sup>

Mahler appears to have been frustrated when he discovered (after the event) that he had inadvertently strayed too close to another composer's theme. He acknowledged some of these unintentional reminiscences to Natalie Bauer-Lechner—two in the first movement of the Fourth Symphony, for example, one from Brahms and one from a Beethoven piano concerto.<sup>74</sup> He was concerned about his inadvertent reference to a Bruckner symphony in his own First Symphony, and he conceded that a theme ("An dem blauen See") by the Carinthian composer Thomas Koschat had crept into the second movement of the Fifth.<sup>75</sup> That said, he must have been taken aback by the ferocious glee with which his critics repeatedly listed all the other composers whose music apparently echoed in his own (such as Leonard Leibling's by no means unusual piece, quoted above). More recent commentators have tended to agree with those critics, while not sharing their hostile agenda. David Schiff, for example, speaks of the "scarcely concealed thematic kleptomania" of the Fourth Symphony, going on to suggest that "Mahler's themes not only echo Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Bruckner, even Tchaikovsky, but they do so brazenly."<sup>76</sup>

Unsurprisingly, echoes of classical composers (especially Beethoven) have been pointed out with some frequency. The closeness of the "Lebwohl" motif of Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 81 (*Les Adieux*), to motifs in both the first and last movements of Mahler's Ninth is a good example of a topical parallel rather than deliberate quotation. So, too, is the similarity of atmosphere between the opening of the Andante from Mahler's Fourth Symphony and the aria "Mir ist so wunderbar" from Beethoven's *Fidelio*.<sup>77</sup> That Mahler's slow movements take Beethoven's as a model is underlined by comparisons made between the Andante of Mahler's Second Symphony and two separate works by Beethoven—the "Andante con Variazioni" from the A flat Piano Sonata, Op. 26, and the E flat Piano Trio, Op. 70/2 (third movement).<sup>78</sup> Schiff hears echoes of Haydn in the second movement of the Third Symphony<sup>79</sup> and the first movement of the Fourth.<sup>80</sup> Elsa Bienenfeld heard a Mozartian character in the Serenade of the Seventh Symphony.<sup>81</sup>

More surprising, perhaps, are the number of comparisons made between passages of Mahler's music and that of J. S. Bach. This derives partly from Bach standing as a symbol of contrapuntal construction and of the German tradition more generally, especially in the case of choral music.<sup>82</sup> Hanslick suggested that Mahler adopted Bach as emblematic of this tradition and, as with his use of folk song, as a way of exceeding a merely individual voice. The Eighth Symphony shows not only a study of Bach's Motets and Cantatas, but according to Donald Mitchell, also a quite specific debt to "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied."<sup>83</sup> Mitchell also suggests that "Der Abschied" is dependent on the model of Bach's Passions for "the idea of juxtaposing recitative and aria as the respective embodiment of objective narration and subjective experience."<sup>84</sup> Kurt Blaukopf points to Mahler's arrangements of Bach in New



York in 1910 as evidence of the increasing importance of this music to him at the end of his life, a fascination that was later taken up by Schoenberg and his pupils.<sup>85</sup>

Echoes of Wagner and Bruckner are common enough in music by composers of Mahler's generation, and plenty of commentators have pointed out superficial similarities.<sup>86</sup> In the case of Bruckner the links are perhaps more specific but rarely significant.<sup>87</sup> Theodor Helm pointed out a reference to Bruckner in the second movement of the First Symphony, and both he and Robert Hirschfeld suggested that the lyrical melody in D flat in the Finale [Fig. 16] showed "what Mahler gained from studying with Anton Bruckner."<sup>88</sup> Marius Flothius has explored links between the Sixth Symphony of Bruckner and that of Mahler.<sup>89</sup> Part 1 of the Eighth Symphony has been related to Bruckner's *Te Deum*, but the slipperiness of such comparisons is underlined by the fact that it has also been related to Bach's "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied," the oratorios of Carl Löwe (especially *Die Zerstörung von Jerusalem*), and Liszt's *Die Legende der heiligen Elisabeth*.<sup>90</sup>

The question of direct quotation in Mahler's music is dealt with exhaustively by Henry-Louis de La Grange.<sup>91</sup> In cataloging his examples La Grange distinguishes two main categories: unintentional reminiscences and intentional allusions or quotations, thus simplifying the more numerous categories of the earlier scholars he cites: Monika Tibbe (1971), Marius Flothius (1985), and Reinhard Kapp (1989). La Grange cites fifty-one examples of literal quotations of other music found in Mahler, plus a further ten examples of the "Ewigkeit" motif—derived from the act 3 love duet of Wagner's *Siegfried*, where it is associated with the text "Ewig, ewig."<sup>92</sup> Ten years on, this already needs expanding. While literal quotation suggests a deliberate expressive purpose, this is both rare and generally understated in Mahler. Far more common are the numerous, almost certainly accidental, echoes of (mis)remembered fragments from other works. Their significance lies in the broader stylistic reference they imply rather than in any individual work to which they may allude. What matters is precisely the sense of plural voices, extraneous currents from outside the confines of the work, rather than specific references.<sup>93</sup>

Robert P. Morgan, in an influential article of 1978, drew parallels between Mahler and Charles Ives in their "mutual responses" to the sheer weight of musical tradition: "Mahler was a composer totally immersed in the European tradition—indeed, one sometimes feels that his music is almost overwhelmed by that tradition."<sup>94</sup> David Schiff argues it was not that Mahler was overwhelmed by tradition, but rather that he brought that tradition to a crisis precisely by allowing its internal tensions to come to the fore. To some extent, the anonymous reviewer of a 1905 performance of some of the *Wunderhorn* songs was right when he said of Mahler that "it does not matter to him or to listeners whether the melodies are suffused with juicy banalities or borrowed from Bruckner's Romantic [Symphony] or Flo-tow's 'Martha.'"<sup>95</sup> What matters, as both Morgan and Schiff recognized, is the idea of a universe of tradition, a historical and social totality of voices whose centrifugal proliferation opposes the controlling discipline of the authorial hand.

In theory, it would be possible to construct a concordance of direct, indirect, and allusive references and resonances in his music. One could identify those passages where Mahler refers to his own works as well as works by other composers and to other historical or generic styles more generally. This would have to be updated regularly as new generations of scholars and listeners hear new echoes in Mahler's music. Such a project, however, would perhaps not get much further than a rather taxonomic and external exercise. To be sure, the range of musical echoes within Mahler's work is certainly striking, not least because this occurs in the context of the hallowed autonomy of the Austro-German symphony. But how we understand the *significance* of such connections—deliberate and accidental, precise and vague—hinges on how they function within the musical work as a whole. In isolation, references to other musical works are empty curiosities; as part of a larger pattern of authorial self-consciousness, they become articulate moments, significant points of rupture in the presumed impervious autonomy of the symphony.<sup>96</sup>

While Mahler rarely deploys quotation as a gesture that draws attention to itself, on the other hand, as Adorno and others have remarked, much of his music sounds as if it were, in a more general sense, "in quotation marks." In other words, stylistic reference is often presented as a clear and deliberate strategy of musical signification, but the quotation of specific works or composers is not. Where the latter can be found in Mahler, its function is usually to serve the former. For this reason, identifying Mahler's sources too precisely can be counterproductive because it risks obscuring the stylistic reference by undue attention to a specific source. This strategy of deploying other styles or voices for expressive purpose is deep-seated, and Mahler's early letters suggest that it was not confined to his music. Much has been made of the letters he wrote, at just nineteen years of age, to his friend Josef Steiner in 1879.<sup>97</sup> Alma later commented that in these Mahler was imitating the literary style of Jean Paul, and many have since shared that view; Mahler implicitly admitted their derivative style in a later comment to Natalie Bauer-Lechner. What is significant is the wholesale adoption of a stylistic voice and literary tone; in an effort to channel his own intense feelings, the young pantheistic Mahler takes on a borrowed literary voice. He was not the first or last teenager to do so. The borrowing reflects neither shallowness nor laziness but, rather, a sensitive nature caught in the gap between intense experience and its adequate linguistic or cultural expression. Mahler, like plenty before and after him, reaches for a borrowed literary voice, knowing at the time, and able to reflect later, that the borrowed voice is not quite true.

Some of the same quality of self-conscious borrowing is present in Mahler's letters to his friend Anton Krisper of the same year. They show the same baroque ornamentation and circumlocution, but they are self-aware enough to reflect upon this at the same time: "And now enough of detestable smiling—I have force [*sic*] myself to adopt a cheerful pastoral style so as not to lapse into the old, trite lamentations. I do not want to sigh, yet nor do I want to smile. In my φρόνην [brain] are quartered some squadrons of imprecations and curses: I want them to march

forth now.”<sup>98</sup> The self-consciousness is striking here. He acknowledges that he has ironically adopted one literary style over another because he recognizes the inadequacy of direct expression; at the same time he is happy to reach for a deliberately “learned” style (the use of the Greek word for “brain”). This is early evidence of Mahler trying out plural voices, a plurality that he proposes to externalize by having them “march forth.” The letter as a whole juxtaposes two different kinds of writing between which Mahler moves with a high degree of self-awareness.<sup>99</sup> Later in life, Mahler acknowledged the degree of self-consciousness that marked his (musical) voice: “In earlier years, I used to like to do unusual things in my compositions. Even in outward form, I departed from the beaten track, in the way that a young man likes to dress strikingly, whereas later on one is glad enough to conform outwardly and not to excite notice. . . . Formerly, for instance, if a piece began in D major, I would make a point of concluding it in A flat minor if possible.”<sup>100</sup>

Such deliberate idiosyncrasy, however, was not confined entirely to Mahler's youth. Antony Beaumont, in the preface to his edited volume of Mahler's letters to Alma, remarks on Mahler's tendency to draw on a range of quotation in his letters. “In a manner akin to that of his musical style, he spikes his language with witticisms and *double entendres*, colloquialisms and quotations from librettos and classical works of literature.”<sup>101</sup> Beaumont goes on to relate Mahler's capacity for such allusive play directly to his professional life in the theater, as a man “whose working knowledge of well-known (and often less than well-known) works provided him with a store of quotations for almost any situation in life.”<sup>102</sup> The letters remind us of something often forgotten, that an overwhelming amount of the music Mahler conducted in the early part of his conducting career was drawn from the realm of light music. The composer we still associate so strongly with the grand Austro-German tradition of Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, and Bruckner was, for much of his early career, usually conducting operetta and ballet.

The list of composers tells its own story: Adolphe Adam, Daniel Auber, Léo Delibes, Friedrich von Flotow, Alberto Franchetti, Charles Gounod, Jacques Halévy, Englebert Humperdinck, Charles Lecocq, Franz Lehár, Albert Lortzing, Louis-Aimé Maillart, Heinrich Marschner, Étienne-Nicolas Méhul, Otto Nicolai, Jacques Offenbach, Franz von Suppé, Johann Strauss. Mahler's attitude to this was ambivalent. At times he railed furiously against the “worthless trash” he was forced to conduct, and at the Hofoper he avoided conducting ballet entirely. On the other hand, he clearly developed a real fondness for many of the lighter works he got to know. Esti Sheinberg makes an interesting comparison between certain waltzes by Johann Strauss and their deformations by Mahler in the second movement of his Fourth Symphony. In the case of the scherzo of the Third Symphony (mm. 147–148) she suggests that Mahler quotes from Strauss's *Frühlingsstimmen* waltz, showing how the original is distorted through exaggeration.<sup>103</sup> Stephen Hefling similarly suggested that Strauss's waltz suite *Freut Euch des Lebens*, “which Mahler probably knew from his youth,” is paraphrased, in 4/4 meter, in the first movement of Mahler's Ninth Symphony,

whose melodic material is, Heffling suggests, “not far removed from nineteenth-century popular music in its simple shape and phrasing.”<sup>104</sup>

Natalie Bauer-Lechner reports Mahler as saying that, after Mozart and Wagner (and of course, Beethoven), the greatest German opera composer was Albert Lortzing, whose opera *Zar und Zimmermann* was one of Mahler’s favorites and to which he makes frequent lighthearted references in his correspondence.<sup>105</sup> Of Halévy’s opera *La Juive*, which he was conducting in Leipzig, Mahler wrote to his friend Fritz Löhr: “I am utterly fascinated by this wonderful, magnificent work, and rank it among the greatest ever created.”<sup>106</sup> To Arnold Berliner he wrote, “Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel* is a masterpiece, and I treasure it as a delightful addition to dramatic literature.”<sup>107</sup> Alma tells a delicious story of how, one day walking on the Ringstrasse, they disagreed about a musical detail from Lehár’s *Merry Widow*. They went into a music shop to check the detail in the score, but because Mahler could not countenance being seen to read one of Lehár’s scores, Alma had to distract the shopkeeper while Mahler surreptitiously read the score.<sup>108</sup> Some light on Mahler’s ambivalent attitude toward light music may be shed by the great Viennese critic and satirist Karl Kraus, who famously preferred operetta (Offenbach in particular) to opera, much to the bewilderment of admirers like Schoenberg and Webern. Kraus deemed opera to be nonsense because it purported to be real, whereas operetta was aware of its own absurdity.<sup>109</sup> Kraus’s observation opens up a peculiarly Mahlerian tension, between the grand claims to authenticity of opera, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the self-critical lightheartedness of operetta which reveled in its own conventionality and artificiality.

The degree of common ground between Mahler’s music and that of the lighter operas, operettas, and ballets he conducted remains curiously underresearched. So much of this music is little known and seldom played today that we miss the resonances picked up by Mahler’s contemporary critics for whom this music was a familiar presence. Humperdinck provides a good example. Mahler had little time for the modern movement in theatrical realism and hung on to the fairy-tale world of romantic opera, as his own early operatic plans would seem to endorse. In Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel* (1893) Mahler found a childlike vision that was far more to his own taste. In the central movements of Mahler symphonies one often hears a tone that is, by turns, childlike, innocent, folkish, sentimental, nostalgic, fairy tale—the same tones that characterize a work like *Hänsel und Gretel*. Its literary source is the story by the Brothers Grimm, written in 1812–1814 only a few years after the publication of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and Humperdinck’s musical response to this literary romanticism, like Mahler’s, emphasizes a wistful sense of distance.

While Humperdinck’s music demonstrates that Mahler was by no means alone in his post-Wagnerian re-creation of the romantic fairy tale, it is perhaps Mahler’s *direct* involvement with music and literary romanticism that has the most resonant effect on his own music. Mahler’s music shows strong debts to key romantic composers—to Schubert, Schumann, Weber, Berlioz, and Mendelssohn—but also to such less well-known figures as Lortzing, Marschner, or Halévy. These debts are

born out by links with specific works that Mahler knew, usually through conducting them, but also in more general stylistic similarities. The ease with which he appropriated elements of a much earlier music and his own sense of being “at home” in this repertoire is underlined by his unique encounter with Weber’s music in 1887. Mahler was at that time working in Hamburg, where he was approached by the composer’s grandson with an invitation to complete a comic opera left unfinished by Weber at his death in 1826.

Mahler’s subsequent completion of Weber’s *Die Drei Pintos* is significant in several ways. James L. Zychowicz underlines that this was “the only opera project Mahler realized in his career” and that it should certainly be seen in the context of his early efforts to write his own opera: *Die Argonauten, Herzog Ernst von Schwaben* and *Rübezahl*.<sup>110</sup> But, crucially, it also highlights the proximity between his own composition and the idea of a pastiche of the romantic style. What made Mahler’s work on Weber easier was the fact that, in his own works, the evocation of an essentially romantic sound world was becoming more and more important. So although Mahler’s own composition here is relatively confined (he himself rather exaggerated it), it necessitated an aptitude and willingness to engage in historical pastiche. The overlap was clear enough for Mahler himself to see, as he later commented to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, saying that as he worked on the Weber project he composed “as I felt inclined . . . becoming more and more ‘Mahlerisch’” while admitting that “it is precisely these new numbers which were most highly praised by critics and public afterwards, and which were considered ‘pure Weber.’”<sup>111</sup>

The amount of original composition required was relatively small: Mahler wrote the act 1 *Entr’act*, using themes by Weber, and a Finale to act 3 (No. 20, Finale A), also on themes by Weber drawn from act 1. The remainder of the work was put together from material Weber had already sketched for the opera or was drawn by Mahler from other works by Weber. In other words, Mahler manipulated a considerable amount of preexisting material for a new purpose. Since much of that material was of an archaic and folklike character, this task anticipated aspects of the composition of his *Wunderhorn* symphonies. Mahler’s original contributions underline the proximity between his own “romantic” voice and Weber’s. The act 1 *Entr’act*, a light march that has much in common with Mahler’s music, shows an obvious affinity to the fairy-tale world of Weber and Mendelssohn but also anticipates several similar passages in later Mahler symphonies. Marked *Traumhaft, leise*, it makes prominent use of Mahler’s musical markers of a fairy-tale or dreamworld—string pizzicato and triangle mixed with the folk topics of clarinet triplet grace-note figures, long harmonic pedals, and folk clarinet interjections in thirds and sixths. It also says something about Mahler’s attitude toward the usual boundary between works, composers, and their languages. This mixing of his own material with Weber’s, taking on Weber’s as his own,<sup>112</sup> passing off his own as Weber’s links not only to his own use of borrowed musical voices but also his attitude toward the works of other composers that he was not averse to retouching.<sup>113</sup>

It is perhaps no more than a neat coincidence that *Die Drei Pintos* is a story of mistaken identity, hinging on the ability of characters to take on the identity of others: Don Gaston poses as Don Pinto in order to court Clarissa, though in the end it is Don Gomez who marries her (these are the “three Pintos” of the title). Mahler clearly enjoyed taking on the identity of Weber and won considerable success with the impersonation when the opera was performed. Hans von Bülow was privately disparaging about its success. His acerbic comment puns on the names of both composers: “here Weber-ly [woven], there Mahler-ly [painted], all the same: the entirety is, by God, a shameless, antiquated mess.”<sup>114</sup> Perhaps it is not irrelevant to note that what he found fault with was precisely what critics of Mahler’s own music were to dwell on—the mixing up of different musical voices and its curiously “old-fashioned” aspects.<sup>115</sup>

The apparent ease with which Mahler “wove” together threads of his own music with that of Weber, points to a wider common ground that Mahler shared with the early romantic generation. Schubert and Schumann both have a distinct presence in Mahler’s music, not least because they too moved between songs and symphonies and between the evocation of a *Volkston* and more sophisticated musical voices. For all that Mahler was rather critical of Schubert’s music, the debts of his *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* to Schubert’s *Winterreise* and *Die schöne Müllerin* have often been noted. Susan Youens, for example, suggests that Mahler’s *Gesellen* cycle is “at its heart a response to Schubert’s *Winterreise*,” underlined by clear parallels in poetic topic and structure. The protagonist of Mahler’s cycle, she points out, recalls the journeyman of *Die schöne Müllerin* but even more the wanderer of *Winterreise*, and the linden tree of Mahler’s final song is taken directly from Schubert’s wintry cycle, in which it is the lovers’ meeting place. Even the juxtaposition of D major/D minor binds the two works together.<sup>116</sup> Miriam Whaples suggests that Mahler exhibits similar debts to Schubert’s piano music, probably deriving from those sonatas that Mahler studied as a young conservatoire student with Julius Epstein. Whaples points to specific echoes in “Lob des hohen Verstands” and in movements of the First, Third, Fourth, and Seventh symphonies.<sup>117</sup> Paul Bekker traced a special genealogy of the Austrian symphony from Schubert to Mahler, via Bruckner, and Mahler himself referred to the second movement of the Second Symphony as “Schubertisch.”<sup>118</sup>

As a young man, Mahler was far more interested in Schumann than Schubert. Susanne Vill cites Mahler’s fragmentary setting of “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai” as a homage to Schumann.<sup>119</sup> The link is anticipated, as she points out, in Schumann’s “Der Knabe mit dem Wunderhorn” (Geibel), Op. 30/1, with its use of horn signals, fanfares, and folk melodies.<sup>120</sup> Mary Dargie compares Mahler’s early song “Frühlingsmorgen” to Schumann’s “Der Nussbaum,” though all the early songs show an obvious debt to Schumann.<sup>121</sup> Stephen Hefling suggests that the irony in “Winterlied” is derived directly from Schumann,<sup>122</sup> and Reinhard Kapp has discussed the similar attitude of Mahler and Schumann toward the question of musical reminiscences.<sup>123</sup> Schumann’s inclination to self-quotation anticipates examples

in Mahler's music, but it is perhaps Schumann's use of episodes from one genre of music interpolated into another that constitutes the most significant link between the two composers; the section marked *Im Legendenton*, interpolated into the first movement of the *Fantasie*, Op. 17, anticipates the episodic intrusions of many of Mahler's symphonic movements.

One could easily multiply the echoes and parallels between Mahler and a host of early romantic composers. Mendelssohn is heard generically in Mahler rather than in specific references, but the music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* lies behind several passages in Mahler's early scherzos and interlude movements. His familiarity with Mendelssohn's *St Paul* (conducted in Kassel in 1885) and Second Symphony (with its choral finale) may both have been important precedents for the hybrid symphonic/cantata form that Mahler later employed himself. Liszt's *Die Legende von der heilige Elisabeth*, a work that Mahler insisted should be staged, stands in the same relation to his own hybrid forms and their latent theatricality.<sup>124</sup> Commentators have suggested echoes in Mahler of Liszt's *Rhapsodie espagnole* (in the Scherzo of the Third Symphony) and the *Faust* Symphony (in the Scherzo of the Sixth Symphony).<sup>125</sup>

But the single most pervasive and substantial romantic musical voice in Mahler's music must be that of Hector Berlioz, less in terms of a distinct tone (as with Schubert or Schumann) than in terms of aesthetic conception of the symphony as drama. Henry-Louis de La Grange has drawn attention to the similarities between Berlioz and Mahler, citing their fondness for the same literature (Shakespeare, Goethe, Jean Paul, and Hoffmann) as a common source. He cites Aaron Copland's observation that both were inclined to "heroic naïveté" and "theatrical religiosity." Both were criticized for seeking "to create an effect" and for "theatricalizing the symphony."<sup>126</sup> Berlioz's tendency to write in "scenes" gives his work not only an operatic quality, but also the same novelesque element so often noted in Mahler's work. De La Grange cites the *Symphonie Fantastique* as a prime example: "This 'novel,' infinitely more complex than an opera libretto, was organized not only by chapters (the movements) but also in the 'divisions' by which the *Fantastique* is split in two. The first part—the first three movements—takes place in the 'real' world; the last two movements constitute the imaginary or nightmare world. Mahler divided several of his symphonies in this way."<sup>127</sup> Indeed, La Grange goes on to suggest that the Finale of Mahler's Second Symphony is more closely related to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Roméo et Juliette* than it is to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Mahler conducted the *Symphonie Fantastique* twelve times, with evident relish.<sup>128</sup> It is a work that anticipates his own in several key ways—in its projection of a self-consciously autobiographical voice, its programmaticism, its debts to Beethoven and, most important, its hybrid approach to symphonic form. This was evident too in *Harold en Italie* and especially in the "dramatic symphony" *Roméo et Juliette*, though nowhere in quite such extreme and bizarre fashion as in *Lélio* (*Le retour à la vie*), the sequel to the *Symphonie Fantastique* (*épisode de la vie d'un*

*artiste*) and thus the forerunner of Mahler's pairing of his first two symphonies in which the fallen hero of the first returns in the second. The mixing of genres in *Lélio* is marked by a mixing of forces that include song with piano accompaniment, the harp as accompaniment to the "Song of Bliss," an actor delivering a spoken monologue, as well as orchestral musicians (a full orchestra is positioned behind a red gauze curtain, according to Berlioz's instructions). The work also uses preexisting materials (Berlioz's setting of Goethe in the song "Le Pêcheur"), various links to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, and a "Chanson de Brigands," linking the work to *Harold en Italie*. The orchestral "Fantasy of The Tempest" is a proper symphonic movement but thus seems disproportionately long within this work, while the movement entitled "La Harpe Eolienne—Souvenirs" anticipates film music.

*Harold en Italie* mixes not only genres (symphony and concerto), but also musical voices. Its Bachian opening, for example, gives way to the folk song simplicity of the solo viola. Formal sectional divisions intermingle with a free programmatic narrative. As in Mahler, the movements stand as self-contained character pieces but defamiliarized: the "canto religioso" is not a real Pilgrim's march; neither is the mountaineers' bagpipe music a piece of musical realism. Folk music is invoked in the Serenade (by the cor anglais) but is taken up by the full orchestra in a quite different tone. As the *Symphonie Fantastique* divides between reality and fantasy, so too does *Harold* move between reality and memory by means of the *idée fixe*.

One cannot consider the idea of "borrowed voices" in Mahler's music, the wealth of reminiscences, echoes, and allusions to preexisting music, without addressing the fact that the most deliberate and arguably the most important of these are instances of self-borrowing. The most substantial of these are of course the use of his own songs as the basis of symphonic movements, sometimes with voice (as with "Urlicht" in the Third Symphony or "Das Himmlische Leben" in the Fourth) and sometimes without voice (as in the use of "Hans und Grete" in the First Symphony, "Der Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" in the Second, or "Ablösung im Sommer" in the Third). Raymond Knapp points out that of the nineteen movements that constitute the first four symphonies, thirteen either involve vocal forces or derive in part from songs.<sup>129</sup> Strictly speaking, Mahler's symphonic treatment of his own earlier song material does not constitute an act of quotation, since materials are not framed in such a way as to distance them from some normative orchestral narrative voice, which would be required by an act of quotation. Although it is entirely possible that audiences of later performances of these symphonies may have already been familiar with the songs on which some of their movements are based, the use of this material does not presume that familiarity or depend on it for its semantic effect.

Of a different order, however, are those short excerpts of preexisting songs (often only a few bars or a single phrase) that reappear in subsequent symphonic movements. Monika Tibbe has pointed out reminiscences of "Revelge" in the third movement of the First Symphony and both "Nachtmusik" movements of the Seventh; of "Das irdische Leben" in the third movement of the Tenth Symphony; of "Ich



bin der Welt abhanden gekommen" and "Oft denk ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen" in Part 2 of the Eighth Symphony and the fourth movement of the Seventh. Such reminiscences are largely absorbed into the fabric of the surrounding music without drawing attention to themselves, but Tibbe distinguishes these from what she sees as more deliberate and semantically charged quotations of earlier song materials. Three of the most prominent examples are drawn from the *Kindertotenlieder* and appear in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony (m. 313), the Andante of the Fourth Symphony (mm. 80–81), and the Finale of the Ninth Symphony (at mm. 13, 107, 160).<sup>130</sup>

The evidence for and significance of these examples are discussed at some length by Monika Tibbe and others, so I will not repeat the details here. The larger question that arises is of course whether one should hear these passages as quotations, recognize them as such, and bring to the symphonic contexts the poetic meaning of the texts implied by the song quotations. There is, for example, undoubtedly an expressive parallel between the passages in question. The expression, in the first of the *Kindertotenlieder*, of an impossible hope that the catastrophe might not have occurred after all resonates powerfully with the relevant passage in the Fifth Symphony, where an unprepared lyrical interlude (D major) suspends an otherwise unrelenting funeral march (D flat minor).<sup>131</sup> The most discussed of these quotations, however, is the threefold reference in the Finale of the Ninth Symphony to the fourth of the *Kindertotenlieder*. Tibbe argues strongly for a quite deliberate compositional strategy here: "The whole song is in outline and important details transferred into the symphonic movement; the openings correspond with each other, the strophe endings are quoted in the course of the movement, the ending of the symphonic movement is a paraphrase of the song ending. The quotations are not only isolated references to individual places in the song, but signs of an overreaching indication of the outline of the song in the symphonic movement."<sup>132</sup>

Such examples seem convincing enough, though it is important to remember that certain types of melodic contour recur with some regularity in Mahler's music, often arising from topical recurrences rather than being cases of strict quotation. Even the examples from the *Kindertotenlieder* discussed above are not framed as self-quotation in anything like the deliberate manner of, say, Strauss in *Ein Heldenleben* or Elgar in *The Music Makers*. In the end, questions of composers' intentions may be an interpretative red herring when the expressive intent is already fulsomely underlined by the intertextual use of clear musical topics. Such an approach would seem to work well in relationship to other identified song references in the symphonies.<sup>133</sup> Certainly, the more incidences of quotation are "discovered" in Mahler, whether of his own music or that of other composers, the more one needs to distinguish between the semantically significant and insignificant. The music of most composers provides plenty of echoes and reminiscences of passages from other music as an inevitable consequence of using a shared and common language. Far less common is where a composer deliberately frames such relations in order to imply a reference

beyond the single work. In other words, while intertextuality is ubiquitous, not all composers (as not all writers) deploy it self-consciously for deliberate effect.

It is clear that Mahler frequently used material reminiscent of passages from other works by either himself or other composers. In most of these cases it can be shown that the passages in question display a similarity of topic, dramatic situation, and expressive purpose. The vast majority of incidences of intertextuality in Mahler's music are of this nature, where the deliberate framing gestures required by quotation are absent. Even where quotation is deliberate and sustained, interpretation remains problematic. The passages shared between *Das klagende Lied* ("Der Spielmann," Fig. 21; "Hochzeitstück," Fig. 29) and the early song "Im Lenz" (mm. 21–27 and 42–53) may well have been no more than a slightly lazy case of overlap, of using material to hand that originated from a similar expressive source.<sup>134</sup> Most creative artists, in any medium, have done likewise at some point. Peter Franklin points out that the pastoral episode in the first movement of the Sixth Symphony is "linked to an emergent lyrical idea recalling one of the resurrection motifs of the Second Symphony."<sup>135</sup> It is clear that the pastoral episode in question, in the face of the unremitting negativity of the music that surrounds it, proposes a distant vision of utopian resolution and fulfillment; in this, it relates clearly to the resurrection topic of the Second Symphony. Unsurprisingly, Mahler reaches for similar materials. Is a more specific reference to the idea of resurrection either denoted by the use of similar material or thereby conferred to the first movement of the Sixth? Almost certainly not. What is significant is how the vocabulary established and expanded by such recurrent motifs in a composer's work (as in that of a writer or painter) establishes a sophisticated field of reference but without any particular example exerting some semantic or interpretative priority.

Mahler was not a neoclassicist, let alone some kind of proto-postmodernist. He does not play with allusion, quotation, intertextuality, or borrowed voices for deliberate effect, to question the nature of musical expression in the face of the conventionality of musical language. But his music does. In spite of its composer, Mahler's music makes audible, in its structural disjunctions and the surface breaks of its musical voice, the strain of a musical tradition that bulges at the seams with the weight of its own accrued past. Mahler's frustration at recognizing echoes of other composers' music, just as much as the critics' indignation at Mahler's perceived lack of originality, is an expression of an unconscious bewilderment at a historical situation: the self-destruction of a musical tradition through the weight of its own over-rich material. In Mahler's music this historical tension manifested itself in a startling contrast—between the "annihilating negativity" of *Humor* and irony on the one hand, and the persistence of an urgently expressive voice on the other.

# 5

## Genre and Voice

Mahler's work *assumes* a relationship between music and telling. The theoretical question as to whether music *can* be related to language, narrative, or representation is kept at a distance by the music itself, which proceeds *as if* such a relation were the case. The task of interpretation is surely not to refute this aesthetic "as if" but, rather, to embrace its fictionality, to understand better what something is through an understanding of how it works. Theodor Adorno suggests that Mahler's music underlines "that music might narrate without narrative *content*,"<sup>1</sup> implying that the activity of narration itself is the substance of the music. And by proceeding as if music were capable of narration and representation, Mahler's music does, at the same time, reflect on the larger theoretical question of its possibility. It is defined by its self-questioning of music as an expressive language and its tension between an adequate relationship to experience, on the one hand, and a freedom for aesthetic invention, on the other. This is marked by its engagement with the legacy of the Beethovenian symphony, its reflection on the programmatic assumptions of the works of Berlioz, Liszt, and Strauss, and its debts to a host of narrative conventions from theatrical and other nonsymphonic musical genres. On the one hand, it approaches the pictorialism of Richard Strauss by which musical narrative anticipates a filmic realism; on the other hand, it approaches an Expressionist critique of a merely external materialism. Mahler's music thus locates itself midway between a Strauss tone poem and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*—between an outward narration that takes the expressive capacity of its own language for granted and a meta-linguistic critique based on the constant interrogation of its own propositions.

Mahler's original titles for the movements of the Third Symphony signal the importance of the idea of telling to his music: "What the meadow flowers tell me," "What the creatures of the forest tell me," and so forth.<sup>2</sup> But while Mahler's music is presented as a kind of telling, at the same time it questions its own capacity to do so. By foregrounding a diverse range of musical, literary, and theatrical genres, the music's narrative voice is alternately affirmed and decentered. The genres on which Mahler draws are not so much integrated models for his musical language but rather a repertoire of different ways of telling whose constant exchange constitutes a

critical reflection on symphonic form. Different genres, with their different expressive conventions, are thus employed simultaneously to extend and to question the idea of symphonic music as a kind of telling.<sup>3</sup> Mahler was by no means the first to use plural genres within a work as an expressive device. The symphony, even in its most conventional four-movement plan, was always defined by the juxtaposition of different musical genres (sonata, slow movement, scherzo, finale) and their different ways of telling (discourse, lyric, dance, festival). Mahler should certainly be seen in the wider context of genre play in music, from Haydn through to Stravinsky, but his music represents a very particular balance of elements. Generalizing greatly, whereas in Haydn the generic play sets off the strength of the primary form, and whereas Stravinsky reverses this equation to dissolve the claim of the primary form through generic deformations, in Mahler the two are more equally poised in a state of heightened contradiction.

This chapter explores three principal genres independently of one another, considering how Mahler's symphonic music is shaped in relation to their expectations. Of course, his music functions precisely by the disorientating and often dramatic effect of *changing* genres, of switching between them, or even of combining more than one at the same time. For Vera Micznik, and many others, Mahler's deployment of different genre references constitutes a way of forming a musical plot, acting as a "generator of meaning in a musical work."<sup>4</sup> At the same time, as Tzvetan Todorov reminds us, genre only becomes visible through transgression, its conventions exposed only by their contravention.<sup>5</sup> So the means by which Mahler's music narrates—the play of different genres—is also the means by which his music comes to question its own narrative assumptions. This is clear even in his earliest music. In "Winterlied" (1880), for example, a pastoral is exceeded by the love song that follows it and changed once again by the piano's lullaby that closes the piece. This is the genre equivalent to progressive tonality; the song ends with a voice quite different from the one with which it began.

Raymond Monelle provides a symphonic example of the same strategy. He identifies, in the second movement of the Sixth Symphony, "a complex interplay of generic types," these being the march, the Ländler, and the *altväterisch* folk dance.<sup>6</sup> The social origin of these generic types confers a cultural dimension to their musical use.<sup>7</sup> That Mahler's genres were readily recognizable to his audience is clear from the bemusement (and critical glee) with which his critics honed in on them. The charge of banality arises because, whereas the incipient modernism of the nineteenth century tended to distance itself from generic models, Mahler's music is marked by a "perverse" exaggeration of them, albeit only to undermine and frustrate the expectations they imply. This might explain some of the critical force behind the attacks on Mahler's approach to genre. Eduard Hanslick, reviewing a premiere of some Mahler songs in 1900 (two *Gesellen* songs and three *Wunderhorn* songs) wrote: "The new songs are difficult to classify: neither Lied nor aria, nor dramatic scene, they possess something of all these forms. More than anything, their form recalls that of

Berlioz's songs with orchestral accompaniment."<sup>8</sup> As Heather Dubrow has argued, to question genre is also to question the social values represented by it.<sup>9</sup> The hostility often aroused by Mahler's symphonies during his own lifetime has its roots here; the sanctity of the genre within Austro-German musical culture was seen to be threatened, even ridiculed by Mahler's bewildering play of high and low genres. And if the aesthetic genre is a marker of social order as well as social values, the vituperative tone of Robert Hirschfeld's review of the First Symphony as "a satire of the symphony" begins to make more sense.<sup>10</sup>

And yet, the symphony was always thus. As Robert Samuels underlines, the symphonic scherzo was already a generic distortion of a minuet, so Mahler received a form already marked by generic disruptions.<sup>11</sup> Leo Treitler argues that the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is marked by a mixing of instrumental and vocal genres and insists that the final section (m. 763 to the end) "has the gestural identity of an opera finale (say, the finale of *Fidelio*)."<sup>12</sup> The significance of this reference lies not in some abstract reference to opera, but, rather, its functional role: the evocation of an operatic finale is a way of making an ending, of finding a denouement thus far lacking in this instrumental symphony. In the same way, Treitler continues, the use of a recitative genre at the beginning of the movement "brings a kind of culture-shock (we might call it 'genre-shock'). It signals a breakdown in the purely musical means of expression."<sup>13</sup> Genre is thus a way of telling here, implying by its deployment of certain conventions that the music might be heard in certain ways. Beethoven was already wrestling, a century before Mahler, with the plural genres built into the different movement types of the symphony. These were held together in an uneasy balance between the larger, teleological order of the symphony and the tendency of the unrelated, heterogeneous genres that it comprises to resist such overarching order.

Mahler exacerbates this tension at the heart of the symphony by the types of movement he deploys and by multiplying their number and the abruptness of their stylistic juxtapositions. Mikhail Bakhtin discusses a literary genre, which he refers to as "Menippean satire," that offers a productive way of conceiving of the Mahlerian symphony:

The most important characteristic of the menippea as a genre is the fact that its bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure is internally motivated, justified by and devoted to a purely ideational and philosophical end: the creation of *extraordinary situations* for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a truth, embodied in the image of a wise man, the seeker of this truth. We emphasize that the fantastic here serves not for the positive *embodiment* of truth, but as a mode for searching after truth, provoking it, and, most important, *testing* it. To this end the heroes of Menippean satire ascend into heaven, descend into the nether world, wander through unknown and fantastic lands, are placed

in extraordinary life situations.... Very often the fantastic takes on the character of an adventure story; sometimes it assumes a symbolic or even mystical-religious character. Characteristic for the *menippea* is a wide use of inserted genres: novellas, letters, orational speeches, symposia, and so on; also characteristic is a mixing of prose and poetic speech. The inserted genres are presented at various distances from the ultimate authorial position, that is, with varying degrees of parodying and objectification.<sup>14</sup>

The musical corollaries in Mahler's work hardly need underlining—the mixing of epic and lyric voices, the insertion of quite different genres, often with the intent of parody, the fantastical and heavenly juxtaposed with the infernal and diabolic, the sublime with the utterly negative, and across the whole thing a sense of *testing* the truth of what is asserted. Bakhtin goes on to make the point that this genre derives from, and relates to, an essentially heterogeneous world; though deriving his model from ancient literature, he uses it as a tool for analyzing the novels of Dostoyevsky. Mahler's world was no less heterogeneous than Dostoyevsky's, and the tension between the heroic narrative that Mahler reactivates and its satirical other marks his music at every turn.

## Song

A narrative tone first enters Mahler's work through song, above all, through the ballad, as Adorno underlines: "As ballades Mahler's songs organize themselves according to the formal law of the narrative, a time continuum of successive, essentially related yet distinct events."<sup>15</sup> While Monika Tibbe rightly points out that Mahler's songs, on the whole, are not ballads, they were often heard as such because of their poetic topics as much as for their musical structure.<sup>16</sup> We know from Natalie Bauer-Lechner that Carl Löwe was an admired and important figure for Mahler ("He would understand my Humoresques, for in fact, he is the precursor of this form of writing").<sup>17</sup> What defines the balladic narration is a third-person, past tense voice, whereas a lyrical, first-person voice, heard in the present tense, defines the Lied proper; or, as Michael Oltmanns puts it: "At the center of the balladic song stands the story; at the center of the lyrical song stands the storyteller."<sup>18</sup> But the opposition of the epic ballad and the lyric song rests on a paradox that Mahler's symphonic music exacerbates rather than reconciles. The ballad tells a story by narrating the sequential unfolding of events, but these are in the past tense because the narrated events have already taken place and are already complete. The telling is delivered by an essentially static set of repeating strophes; as Carolyn Abbate observes, the epic or folk ballad "unwinds over multiple verses of identical prosodic and structural design."<sup>19</sup> The lyric, on the other hand, is ostensibly out of time, like

the operatic aria. Yet, while confined to the present tense, it moves between reminiscence and anticipation, heightening the sense of a subjective identity precisely by this intensity of the moment, stretched between the closed events of the past and the open possibilities of the future.

Both voices are taken up in Mahler's symphonies. From the ballad form Mahler drew on the strophic alternation of two different character voices. These were usually a man and a woman, often marked simply as "He" and "She." This was common practice for Schubert, Löwe, and many others, and performers and listeners alike have had no difficulty in the "suspension of disbelief" required by this degree of dramatic internalization whereby one singer stands in for different characters. This alternation of voice would be unremarkable except that Mahler takes it up in a singularly unsymphonic way, allowing dualistic alternation to displace a more classical idea of development, as a comparison of Mahler's symphonies with those of Brahms instantly makes clear. Monika Tibbe underlines that what is striking about Mahler's use of preexisting song material as the basis of symphonic movements is that he imports it essentially unchanged into the symphony. This has the effect of underlining the generic distance between the two, as compared to merely borrowing motifs for symphonic development, and of establishing formal tensions between the expectations of the two different genres—that is, of strophic repetition versus symphonic development.<sup>20</sup> This is perhaps what Adorno was referring to in his claim that "the unifying element of lyric and symphony is the ballade."<sup>21</sup> Like so many aspects of Mahler's later music this was anticipated in *Das klagende Lied*, whose radical hybridity of genre includes the idea of epic ballad at its center. The autograph score (dated February 27, 1879) is titled simply "Ballade"; the third autograph (dated March 3, 1880) is titled "Ballade vom blonden und braunen Reitersmann."<sup>22</sup>

The dialogue form is a common type in the *Wunderhorn* songs, being played out in several ways. "Ich ging mit Lust" has a simple dialogue of singer and bird (heard in the piano alone) in which the two voices are kept quite separate, simply alternating throughout. In "Scheiden und Meiden," the piano topic, which dictates the character of the opening narration (here, "knights on horseback"), acts as underlay to the woman's song so that her more lyrical line in duple meter is counterpointed by the compound time of the horse-riding theme. The song thus presents both voices simultaneously, a polyphony made possible by the structural alternation of material as foreground and background. In the first of the *Gesellen* songs, the alternation of two voices is no longer at the level of strophe but almost at the phrase level, with the mournful lyric of the protagonist alternating at short intervals with the rather distant sound of the wedding musicians. It comes close to a simultaneity of voices, separated only by physical rather than temporal distance, an effect that Mahler realized in his symphonic music by means of offstage instruments. Analysis tells us that the vocal part is based on exactly the same material as the wind band, only delivered much slower. Rather than differentiation through key or melodic material, the dissonance of this expressive juxtaposition is entirely

a matter of tone (voice, tempo, gait, rhythm). This is the case over and again in Mahler, that a change of tone (or voice) constitutes the significant opposition, not the material as such. In this case, the despondent lover has no material of his own, no authentic identity, but becomes expressive only by a negative inflection of the world's merrymaking, itself thus revealed as a thoroughly alienated, and alienating, social form. Only gradually does it acquire its own material in the deeper grief of "weine, wein" (mm. 30ff.).

The paradigm pair in Mahler's songs, the soldier and his lover, presents a straightforward and unmediated opposition, as in "Lied des Verfolgten im Turm," which characterizes the prisoner and his lover through topical constructions of military/rural and masculine/feminine oppositions. Such oppositions are often underlined by changes in key and often of tempo. The alternation of major and minor mode, one of the most important devices in Mahler's music, is employed as a structural device in "Wo die schönen Trompeten bläsen," its alternation of D major and D minor anticipating many later examples, from the first of the *Kindertotenlieder* to the first movement of the Ninth Symphony. In these the alternation of voice is more explicitly between two internal voices (both voices belong to the father in *Kindertotenlieder*) realizing what was implied by the more theatrical externalization of the *Wunderhorn* songs. Donald Mitchell underlines how the *Rückert Lieder* mark a shift away from the external narratives of the *Wunderhorn* songs, "from the outwardly dramatic to the lyrical (and the ecstatic); to the progressive interiorization of a dramatic principle that had hitherto been made programmatically explicit; and, not least, to the basic modification of the nature of the inner drama itself."<sup>23</sup>

It is this interiorization of an unmediated alternation, as in a song like "Der Schildwache Nachtlied," that came to be the primary instinct of Mahler's symphonic style. The issue of whether such songs are performed by one singer or two is significant in this context.<sup>24</sup> Sung by one voice, the oppositions of the military (the boy) and the lyrical (the girl) are internalized as aspects of one identity; her voice becomes imagined (whether as memory or fantasy) rather than real. Two voices make the song literal and external, representational rather than internal and psychological.<sup>25</sup> Sung by one voice, such a song becomes a prototype for what Mahler was later to construct again and again in his symphonies—the evocation of an absent voice. Looking back from the symphonic works to the *Wunderhorn* songs casts them in a rather different light, therefore. From this perspective, the stock characters are far more important as metaphors of a divided romantic subjectivity than as individually expressive figures. In this, they contradict a basic condition of the lyric, an ambivalence that remains to the fore in *Das Lied von Erde*, written for tenor *and* alto.

Peter Franklin suggests that we might read this division between two voices as an early example of a deconstructive instinct. In discussing "'Trost im Unglück'" he says: "The literal union of the *two* voices, each defiant, suggests (particularly from the girl's point of view) that either voice might be a performative mask, a manner



that can be assumed.”<sup>26</sup> The singer as storyteller in these ballads stands in for the two characters but is identified with neither. Adorno expresses it thus: “Mahler puts these songs into the mouth of someone other than the music’s subject. They do not sing of themselves, but narrate, being epic lyrics like the children’s songs from whose practice at least Mahler’s earlier songs derive in their broken recurrence of melodies of dance and play. Their flow is a kind of storytelling, and their expression a commentary of the story.”<sup>27</sup>

This is the essential difference between a song of lyrical disclosure and one of balladic narration. Mahler draws on both types but with a marked avoidance of the direct lyrical disclosure, one underwritten by the *Wunderhorn* texts themselves. This strategy foregrounds the idea of voice and its construction. The music underlines that the characters “played” by the singer are assumed identities, not the direct expression of the singer as lyrical subject. In other words, the genre itself, the format of the song, frames the idea of calling forth a voice and stages a performance of different voices. Michael Oltmanns points out that the origin of the ballad lies in the “Wechselgesang” in which a main singer alternates with an answering chorus whose refrain derives from the dance.<sup>28</sup> Such a form is one of the oldest embodiments of the idea of calling forth a voice. A story is related by a soloist but through a musical discourse that exceeds the idea of a single singer. At the same time, it constitutes a fundamental division of the musical voice. This two-part division of the voice, heard diachronically in the alternation of two different musical ideas, also is fundamental to Mahler’s musical texture, manifest synchronically as a two-part counterpoint.<sup>29</sup>

Mahler’s early song “Winterlied” provides a good example of the framing of the voice that is taken up more dramatically in *Das klagende Lied*. The conventional pastoral with which the narrator opens acts as a foil to the “song itself,” which is carefully framed by the final line of the first stanza, blurring the distinction between narrator and poet (“Hörst du mich Liebchen?”). The blurring continues into the stanza of the poet, whose music takes on aspects already presented in the introduction (the 9/8 meter, the “murmuring” LH ostinato, and fragments of the opening neighbor note motion). This undermines any firm distinction between the two voices here: they assume different roles but are essentially aspects of the same voice (exactly as the real singer must realize in performance). But the projection of a song within a song underlines the self-conscious nature of this music; it reflects not only on the powerful speechlike quality of song, but also on its constructed nature. “Winterlied” is a song once removed, a reflection on a song, a framing of a song that highlights the nature of the genre. It highlights the self-consciousness of composition and draws the listener in to reflect on the nature of song itself.

This is not to suggest that the love song that forms the second stanza is insincere or an early example of Mahlerian parody. But just as the genre character of the first stanza (as a framing narrative in *volkstön*) is exaggerated, so are the attributes of the love song proper. The answering phrases in the piano RH (mm. 31, 33, 35, etc.) forming a dialogue between voice and instrument, the urgently repeated eighth-note

accompaniment, the appoggiaturas over dominant chords, the harmonic rhythm and the exaggerated ardor of the melodic line eventually climaxing on a high B flat ("Ewig verschwunden!") all add up to a stylized love song and a Lied that threatens to turn into an operatic aria. A third voice emerges in the relatively long piano postlude that follows, which, as in the Schumann examples that Mahler draws on here, works out the unresolved tensions of the song. Its closing F major is a tonal area unrelated to either the narrator's A major or the lover's C minor. As in "Im Lenz," "Winterlied" uses tonal oppositions as a direct embodiment of contrasting voices, with the result that conventional structural relations of key are simply ignored, not so much because this is a young man's music (Mahler was twenty at the time) but more because his tendency here, as throughout his music, was to allow the particularity of voice primacy over the demands of abstract form. The opposition of the C minor March and E major "Gesang" in the first movement of the Second Symphony springs from the same instinct.

When Mahler took up existing songs into purely instrumental movements of his symphonies this multivoiced aspect is greatly magnified. The absence of words in the symphonic movements is only the outer edge of a reformulation that is less about horizontal extension (in terms of duration) than with an increase in depth, in terms of the extension of the different modalities of the song's voices. On one level, the expansion of vocal to orchestral music suggests a neat parallel of individual to collective voice, not least because, as Adorno points out, symphonies say "we" rather than "I." Just as in the first of the *Gesellen* songs, the alternation of two voices often hinges on the negativized version of the original material—as in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony, for example. The first movement of the Second, the Fifth, and the Sixth are all built on polarized dualities in similar fashion. The tension between the two, between the self-contained strophic form of the Lied and the open-ended developmental tendency of the symphony, is framed as such in *Das Lied von der Erde*.<sup>30</sup>

## Opera

It is a curious aspect of Mahler's career that he spent his entire professional life as a conductor of opera yet never composed one. Other composer-conductors of the time, such as Richard Strauss or Alexander Zemlinsky, seem to have found no conflict of interest in conducting other people's operas while writing their own. Various reasons have been advanced as to why Mahler did not do likewise.<sup>31</sup> That he was always busy and had little time for composition is undoubted, yet he completed nearly eleven huge symphonic works, the majority of them while he was at the height of his career as a conductor. Kurt Blaukopf suggests that one reason was a specifically Viennese preference for absolute music over opera, as epitomized by

Bruckner.<sup>32</sup> Constantin Floros underlines a similar reason, arguing that in Mahler's aesthetics the symphony stood higher than opera but also that Mahler's imaginary world, fantastic and eschatological, was simply unrepresentable on the stage.<sup>33</sup> It certainly would have been, given the modern move toward verismo, with which Mahler felt completely out of step, notwithstanding his enthusiastic performances of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (in 1890) and (far less enthusiastically) Leoncavallo's *La Bohème* (in 1898).<sup>34</sup> In a letter to Max Marschalk dated December 4, 1896, he remained hopeful of a return for his completion of Weber's *Die Drei Pintos*, saying: "I regard that work as far from obsolete and am convinced that it will be taken up again when the clamor for Realism has died down."<sup>35</sup>

Of course, as a young man Mahler *did* have plans to write an opera and did complete one (albeit by Weber).<sup>36</sup> The nature of these early projects and their timing are by no means irrelevant to Mahler's symphonic output. According to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, Mahler had wanted to write an opera of his own following the completion of *Die Drei Pintos*, though the account of how he tried the story out on the Webers and how this material subsequently became "Der Schildwache Nachtlied" is not entirely convincing.<sup>37</sup> More significant is that, hard on the heels of his completion of Weber's opera, Mahler composed both the First Symphony and the *Todtenfeier* that was later to form the first movement of the Second. It is far more plausible that the symphonies, rather than the song, constitute the opera he did not write. A playbill for the Prague performance of *Die Drei Pintos* on August 18, 1888, gives Mahler's entr'acte the title "Pinto's Dream: Symphonic Interlude."<sup>38</sup> The link between this and the provisional title of the First Symphony ("Symphonic Poem in Two Parts"), composed in the early part of that year, is striking. The link is further supported by the claim that the composition of both the First Symphony and the *Todtenfeier* was shaped by Mahler's affair with Frau Weber.<sup>39</sup> The operatic characteristics of *Todtenfeier* have been persuasively demonstrated by Stephen Hefling.<sup>40</sup>

We know of three separate plans for an opera considered by Mahler as a young man—*Die Argonauten*, *Herzog Ernst von Schwaben*, and *Rübezahl*.<sup>41</sup> There is no surviving music for any of these, other than what might have been absorbed into other works, and only the libretto for *Rübezahl* survives.<sup>42</sup> The idea for this fairy-tale opera seems to have come from Hugo Wolf and was to be a cause of serious dispute between the student friends. Herta Blaukopf comments on the plot: "The story is quite childish; the characters are like clichés; the language, both prose and poetry, seems in part very clumsy, yet not altogether lacking in wit."<sup>43</sup> We should take this with a pinch of salt: Mahler's literary texts of this period are consistently naive, and the characters they employ are common "types." The mixture of prose and poetry points to an early mixing of genres. Letters testify to his continuing interest in the project for some while. In a letter to Albert Spiegler of June 21, 1880, Mahler asks about Lipiner, to whom he had obviously given the libretto. "It is thoroughly inconsiderate of him to wander about the world with *Rübezahl* in his bag and never to give a sign of life to me, waiting for it. I do not know at *all* if it is still in

existence—for it is the only copy I possess—and should dearly like to do more work on it.”<sup>44</sup> He clearly began its composition, writing to Anton Krisper in an undated letter (sometime before January 10, 1883), “I hope to have the first act of *Rübezahl* ready soon.”<sup>45</sup> In the end, however, Mahler seems to have lost interest in the opera; years later, in the spring of 1896, he sent the libretto to Max Marschalk, suggesting, with the comment “I have quite grown out of him by now,” that Marschalk might like to make something of it. He clearly declined.<sup>46</sup>

The incompletion of the opera, however, may well signal a certain degree of recycling elsewhere. Kurt Blaukopf suggests that Mahler’s interest in fairy tales was simply transmuted into *Das klagende Lied*, a work that he says shows “the birth of symphonic composition out of song.”<sup>47</sup> One might alter that, speculatively, to “the birth of symphonic composition out of opera,” if Paul Stefan had been right that *Das klagende Lied* was originally to be an opera.<sup>48</sup> Guido Adler made the same assumption, reporting: “It is no song: it was originally thought of as a fable for the stage, and was realized as a cantata study.”<sup>49</sup> Both Paul Stefan and Ernst Decsey maintained that it was originally conceived for the stage: “The music hovers between concert and theater and cannot disavow its original disposition for the latter.”<sup>50</sup> While it is hard to see how the text of *Das klagende Lied* could ever have been considered as an opera libretto, its hybridity of concert and semidramatic genres is one of its key features. Edward Reilly calls it a “dramatic cantata”; Mahler himself referred to it as a *Märchenspiel* (a fairy-tale play), a title that may have been carried over from *Rübezahl*.<sup>51</sup> Equally, the title may have arisen from a theatrical version of the story by the poet Martin Greif that was presented in May 1876 as part of a student recital at the Vienna Conservatory in Mahler’s first year there, though there is no proof that Mahler was present.<sup>52</sup>

Whatever the origins of the work, *Das klagende Lied* displays some clear debts to opera. There are Wagnerian echoes in both its setting (knights, castles, catastrophic revelations via musical performances at big public events) and its musical language (a narrative web of recurrent orchestral themes and clear topical allusions). But the work suggests a more general operatic provenance in terms of its scene painting and theatrical narrative. The sequence of discrete topical sections anticipates film music. In “Waldmärchen” this programmatic element threatens the symphonic coherence of the music, creating a highly episodic structure through the separation of each stanza of the text from the preceding one. What works well for storytelling is far too demarcated and separate for symphonic music proper and, moreover, accentuated external representation at the expense of the central psychological drama. This may well have been a reason behind Mahler’s later excision of the entire first part. Thus early, it would seem, Mahler was working out for himself the tension between the representational and narrative concerns of theater and the “inner drama” of symphonic music.

Mahler’s exposure to diverse and hybrid theatrical genres in his early years was thus a significant fund of experience for a composer whose music is caught between

theatrical and autonomous forms. His early professional life as a conductor in the theater meant that he was involved on a daily basis in hybrid genres and the blurring of generic boundaries. In Laibach, for example, his work “extended not only to operas, operettas, *Singspiele* and fairytales with songs, but also to plays.”<sup>53</sup> On at least one occasion he wrote incidental music for a play, a performance of *Der Trompeter von Säkkingen* in Kassel (1884). His brief was to write music for seven “tableaux vivants” drawn from the play, each with a title and “linking narration.”<sup>54</sup> According to Knud Martner, “the selected passages were narrated by an actor (Herr Thies) while members of the cast performed a kind of pantomime illustrating the content of the poem.”<sup>55</sup> A series of tableaux vivants “with linking narration” may not seem to have much to do with the nineteenth-century symphony, but in some respects it is an apt description of many of the inner movements of Mahler’s symphonies. *Das Lied von der Erde* might certainly be considered as a series of tableaux, in which narration becomes explicit only in the final movement. Famously, one movement of Mahler’s “pantomime” music found its way into the First Symphony (the *Blumine* movement, later dropped); other parts of the *Trompeter* music also may have been recycled similarly. Equally possible, and more likely, is that the tableau form was absorbed into Mahler’s lexicon of hybrid genres and formal strategies.

Pierre Boulez, whose dual career as composer and conductor might give him some insight into Mahler’s predicament, once suggested that Mahler’s work “gnaws at the limits of a clearly defined genre” and that, “released from the visual theatre, his professional obsession, Mahler sometimes throws himself almost manically upon this liberty to mix all the genres.”<sup>56</sup> Boulez’s similar comment about Berlioz, “that the concert and the theatre have no borders for him,” might just as well have been meant to include Mahler, Berlioz’s most direct descendant in this respect. It was an element of Mahler’s work that critics consistently underlined, as is evident from the earliest reviews of his music to the very last. Even the local reviewer of the *Mährischer Grenzbote*, writing a report of Mahler’s fund-raising concert in Iglau (September 17, 1876), drew out this element. Commenting on the compositions by the sixteen-year-old Mahler performed at that concert, a piano quintet and a violin sonata, the reviewer reported that “we were struck...by a decided vein of drama.”<sup>57</sup> At the other end of his career, a review of a performance of *Kindertotenlieder*, in the *New York Times*, January 27, 1910, noted: “They are something more and more elaborate than lyrics; and these of Mr Mahler’s, in fact, are in the nature of little dramas or dramatic scenes in miniature.”<sup>58</sup>

If Mahler’s own forays into composing theatrical works may have shaped his early symphonic works, one might reasonably speculate that a lifetime of conducting opera and operetta also had some influence on his own music. For a composer whose life has been so exhaustively researched, Mahler’s career as a conductor remains rather obscure. To be sure, we know where, when, and what he conducted, but the question of what impact this might have had on his own music remains curiously unaddressed. At its most superficial, the link might be manifested in those musical borrowings,

deliberate or inadvertent, that originate in the operatic works Mahler conducted (see chapter 4). A fascinating example of just such an operatic echo appears in the third movement of the First Symphony—the famous intrusion of band music, *Mit Parodie* [Fig. 5]. Much ink has been spilled concerning exactly what kind of folk music this is, whether Bohemian or Moravian, and what kind of itinerant band Mahler draws on here. But an incontrovertible parallel, if an unlikely one, is Verdi's *Don Carlos*. A passage in act 3 shows a marked similarity of melodic shape and is given in the same orchestration (a pair of trumpets).<sup>59</sup> I do not suggest for one moment that Mahler makes deliberate allusion to Verdi's opera here, and yet the reference is by no means insignificant (Exs. 5.1a, 5.1b). In Verdi, this passage accompanies the last, dying words of Rodrigo, Marquis of Posa, who has just been fatally shot. But Mahler never conducted this opera, and perhaps he never heard it either.<sup>60</sup>

**Example 5.1a** Verdi, *Don Carlo*, act 4, scene 2, “O Carlo, ascolta,” Fig. C.22

Assai Moderato (♩ = 60)

(continued)

**Example 5.1a** *Continued***Example 5.1b** First Symphony, third movement, Fig. 5

A Tempo. Ziemlich langsam

5

Tpts.  $\Delta$   
p ausdrucksvoll

Obs.  
p

pizz.

pp

(continued)

There are other parallels between passages of Verdi and Mahler. The sequential climax of the Finale to the Third Symphony [Fig. 18] comes close to the “Bacio, una bacio” sequence in the love duet of Otello and Desdemona at the end of act 1 of *Otello* (Exs. 5.2a, 5.2b). John Williamson cites Henry de La Grange’s observation that the dactylic rhythm at the opening of the Seventh Symphony relates to

**Example 5.1b** *Continued*

**6 Mit Parodie**

the “Miserere” from Verdi’s *Il trovatore*, arguing that this “is adequate evidence that symphonic composers are well capable of restocking their supply of topics from the world of opera.”<sup>61</sup> Such echoes abound and multiply the closer one looks. It is not so much a question of deliberate quotation but more that Mahler reaches for similar solutions to his operatic contemporaries. The affinity between Puccini’s masterful construction of the end of act 1 of *Tosca* over the choir’s intoning of the *Te Deum*, building to a grand unison statement, is unlikely to be an imitation of the similar construction of the ending of the Finale to Mahler’s Second Symphony; nor is the opening to act 3 of *Tosca*, the unison horn call subsiding into the stillness of bells and the calling of a lone shepherd boy, obviously imitative of the opening of Mahler’s Third Symphony. Both examples nevertheless underline that Mahler thought like a man of the theater.<sup>62</sup>

Far more significant for Mahler’s music than operatic incidences and coincidences, however, is the extent to which operatic drama as a way of telling, its rhetoric, structure, and tone, are absorbed into the symphonies. To be sure, Mahler

**Example 5.2a** Verdi, *Otello*, act 1, scene 3, “Bacio, una bacio,” Fig. YY

**YY**

(continued)



Example 5.2a Continued

The first system of music consists of two measures. The right hand plays a melody starting on G4, moving up to A4, then B4, and finally C5. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. The second system also consists of two measures. The right hand continues the melody from the first system. The left hand features a dense texture with many beamed sixteenth notes, creating a rapid, rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo).

Example 5.2b Third Symphony, sixth movement, Fig. 18

18 Etwas breiter wie vorher

The score for Figure 18 is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system has two measures. The right hand plays a melody with a wide interval, starting on G4 and moving to B4. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. The second system also has two measures. The right hand continues the melody. The left hand features a dense texture with many beamed sixteenth notes, creating a rapid, rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The tempo marking "Etwas breiter wie vorher" (Slightly broader than before) is present.

(continued)

## Example 5.2b Continued

The musical score for Example 5.2b Continued consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the voice, and the lower staff is for the piano. Both staves are in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piano part begins with a *p molto cresc.* marking. The voice part begins with a *Riten.* marking. The piano part features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, and the voice part features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The piano part ends with a double bar line, and the voice part continues with a melodic line.

was not alone in this. Carolyn Abbate has underlined a more general tendency in nineteenth-century instrumental music to take on the narrative modes of opera, suggesting that “certain Romantic and fin-de-siècle works might be conceived as *revoicing* opera’s modes of narrative speaking.”<sup>63</sup> Abbate’s idea of “revoicing” is a suggestive one. Mahler’s symphonies take up operatic gesture and language but alter their weight and tone, like a skilled organ maker or piano technician might revoice an instrument. Max Brod, writing in 1965, famously suggested that Mahler’s symphonies are really “operas without words,” which is perhaps the most succinct and compelling explanation of why Mahler never wrote an opera.<sup>64</sup> Adorno, five years earlier, formulated it thus: “That Mahler, who spent his life in the opera and whose symphonic impulse runs parallel to that of opera in so many ways, wrote no operas may be explained by the transfiguration of the objective into the inner world of images. His symphony is *opera assoluta*.”<sup>65</sup> The internalization of operatic ways of telling is perhaps one of the most formative developments in Mahler’s music; it defines the peculiar nature of his symphonic music and explains why contemporary critics and audiences had such difficulties with it but also touches on the directness and power of its voice for present-day audiences.

The First Symphony is already marked by several theatrical traces. The “dawn” introduction of the first movement hovers between a symphonic tradition (of slow introductions over a dominant pedal, from which the ensuing allegro theme is organically derived) and an operatic one, in which an orchestral prelude paints the scene prior to the curtain being raised. The most obvious operatic gesture in this work, however, is surely the opening of the final movement. The fire and brimstone tone here is completely at odds with the preceding three movements and represents an unequivocal change of both voice and genre. Mahler himself underlined how the fourth movement “suddenly flashes like lightening out of a thundercloud.”<sup>66</sup> Such was its effect at the premiere that, at this moment, one woman in the audience apparently dropped everything in her hands!<sup>67</sup> Mahler might also have referred to this opening as a scream, since it draws clearly on that operatic gesture as formulated by Wagner.<sup>68</sup> In this, it makes a direct link to the opening of the finale to

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which Wagner himself referred to as a *Schreckensfanfare*.<sup>69</sup> Stephen Hefling refers to the same idea to characterize the "scream of terror" that opens the finale of Mahler's Second Symphony; its parallels to Beethoven's Ninth are more obvious still.<sup>70</sup> A similarly grand, theatrical gesture occurs at the start of the Finale of the Sixth Symphony, which implies a pictorial dimension or dramatic content.

In all three examples the theatrical gesture violently interrupts the calm at the end of the preceding movement, and, in all three cases, its later return acts as a dramatic *persona*, barring the resolution of the symphonic narrative.<sup>71</sup> In the case of the Sixth Symphony, the cyclic return of the introductory gesture follows the famous hammer blows that signal the impossibility of resolution. In the Finale of the Second Symphony, the presentation of a series of different characters runs out of steam and no longer generates the necessary drama. Mahler's instinct as a theatrical showman provides a crude, if effective, solution: the "fire and brimstone" material is reprised [Fig. 14], as if bringing back the villain just as things were working out. In some ways this relates to the much-discussed "premature" appearance of the chorale in the Finale of the First Symphony, which Mahler explained represents an aesthetic of victory undermined at the point of its achievement and having to be won a second time over. On the other hand, as a symphonic gesture it might seem self-conscious and rather clumsy. Symphonic processes are meant to convey the illusion of a self-generating drama, whereas in theatrical dramas it is perfectly acceptable to have the narrative skewed by intervention from a character extraneous to the scene thus far.

It is not that Mahler somehow fails symphonically at such a juncture, but, rather, that the symphony as a genre fails; its illusion of self-generating progress wears thin and is taken over by an ostensibly theatrical rather than symphonic strategy. What happens at this point is not explicable in any other terms; like the start of the movement itself, it is not derived from within the music and makes sense only by reference to an external theatrical tension. One of the most striking moments in all of Mahler's music embodies the same idea—the episode in A flat minor in the first movement of the Tenth Symphony (mm. 194ff.). Outwardly, this is a horror scene from a nineteenth-century opera, marked as such by its unprepared plunge into a different timbral and tonal world, its harp and string arpeggiations and its circling brass chords. Above all it is a scene that demands programmatic or dramatic explanation since it cannot be explained by a purely musical logic. Like the famous nine-note chord to which it leads, it threatens to break open the defining self-sufficiency of symphonic form.

The theatricality of Mahler's symphonies is made explicit in the Eighth Symphony, whose obvious relation to the Second extends to its theatrical manipulation of massed forces and clearly identified characters. In Part 2, the score contains scenic descriptions, derived from Goethe's play, exactly as if the symphony were an opera; see Fig. 24, for example, where the score's "stage directions" state: "Mountain gorges,

forest, cliff, solitude. Holy anchorites are sheltering in rocky clefts.” Christian Wildhagen discusses the Eighth Symphony as “invisible theater.”<sup>72</sup> Such spatialization lay behind a long-held ambition of Mahler’s to perform Bach’s *Saint Matthew Passion* “with its two orchestras and choruses on opposite sides of the stage and the children’s chorus on a high balcony, so as to realize, spacially [*sic*], question and answer and voices from heaven.”<sup>73</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the theatrical space implied by Mahler’s music, its detailed construction of a spatial dimension, has often been cited as anticipating the use of space in film.<sup>74</sup> Peter Franklin points to a proto-cinematic quality in the opening of the Third Symphony: “As in some Hollywood epic, Mahler first gives us a slow panning shot of the primeval landscape in which eruptive gestures and uprooted rhetorical figures constantly and fruitlessly expend their energy,” but Franklin also sees a theatricality derived directly from opera: “Six bars after cue 9, however, Mahler permits the scene to be engulfed in vapour of the kind employed by Wagner in the scene-changes in *Das Rheingold*.”<sup>75</sup>

The theatricality of Mahler’s music is underlined by that essentially operatic device, the offstage voice. Quite apart from the narrative implications of such a spatial effect, the device makes self-conscious the nature of the musical voice. At the opening of the first movement of the First Symphony and the Finale of the Second Symphony, where the gradual coalescence of elements within a static field frames the entry of the protagonist onto the “stage,” the offstage or distant voice serves to underline a process of calling forth or drawing out of a voice from the silence. A paradigm of Mahler’s “voice from the distance” is of course the post horn episode in the third movement of the Third Symphony; marked *wie aus weiter Ferne*, it is nevertheless played within the orchestra but over a haze of divided strings to confer distance, as if to emphasize metaphorical rather than literal distance.

Such devices are part of a wider theatricalization of the symphony that, more than any composer before Mahler, was achieved in the work of Berlioz. Just as Berlioz, whose operatic ambitions had been blocked early on, found an outlet for these in his “dramatic symphonies,” so it is clear that Mahler’s experience as an operatic conductor shaped his own music.<sup>76</sup> Rudolf Stephan talks of the Second Symphony, for example, as “inszenierter” music and as a “Musikdrama ohner Szenerie.”<sup>77</sup> The German verb “inszenieren” and its gerund “Inszenierung” describe well what takes place in Mahler symphonies, which literally “in-scene” their musical drama, externalizing it toward a state of theatrical enactment. Mahler’s involvement in the scenic aspect of opera production is well documented. Ferdinand Pfohl recollected, of Mahler at the Hamburg Opera: “As an operatic conductor Mahler was possessed to a high degree with stylistic feeling; he cultivated, in the closest relationship with the scenery, an art and culture of expression; he was in one and the same person Director and Conductor; interpreter of the music through the staging [*Szene*], interpreter of the staging through the music; the exemplary Kapellmeister, who

fashioned a definitive relationship to the last and finest details between staging and orchestra, between orchestral expression and sung text, between melos and gesture.”<sup>78</sup>

Franz Willnauer similarly sums up Mahler's theatrical achievement as director of the Vienna Hofoper, where his close working relationship with Alfred Roller was key to his success, as “the creation of a new style of interpretation in which text, action, music and staging formed a unity and, instead of opera being degraded into a concert in costumes, its musico-dramatic character brought to expression. Seen in this way, one could take Mahler to be the ‘founder’ (and first perfecter) of what remains today an integrated ‘music theatre.’”<sup>79</sup>

Such operatic and theatrical elements in Mahler's symphonic music were frequently underlined by critics during Mahler's lifetime; indeed, the perceived importing of operatic music into the symphony was one of the recurrent complaints of hostile critics. Romain Rolland, in his damning critique of German music in 1905, suggested that it had succumbed to what he called a “cult of force.” He undoubtedly had Mahler as well as Strauss in mind when he continued: “I attribute this fact to the detestable influence of the theatre, to which almost all these composers are attached as Kapellmeister, directors of opera, etc. To it they owe the often melodramatic character, or at least, entirely external character of their music—music for show, which constantly aims at effect.”<sup>80</sup> Max Kalbeck, reviewing a performance of the Fifth Symphony in the same year, underlined the importance of the orchestra to Mahler's creative imagination, emphasizing that he meant “not the orchestra of the concert hall, which inspired the great masters of instrumental music, but rather that of the theater.” Specifically, he linked Mahler's symphonies to the emancipation of the orchestra in Wagnerian music drama. But Kalbeck loathed Wagner's music and was highly critical of what he saw as its detrimental effect when imported into the symphony: “Opera and music drama not only colored Mahler's orchestra but also led him to deploy the human voice as a narrative instrument. So too did they invade the form of his symphonies, tearing it to pieces....Mahler in turn led this opera orchestra from the theater to the concert hall, assigning it the mission of envoicing his musical intentions with unprecedented clarity.”<sup>81</sup> In the case of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, he linked Mahler's orchestral voices back through Wagner to Beethoven's Ninth: “The ‘unending’ melody, the *arioso*, follows him from the orchestra of the music drama and casts contrapuntal shadows....The melodies that surge up and down seem to call for a poetic text...and their style is more like that of a recitative rather than that of a song. The listener feels tempted to add words to them, like the recitatives in the Finale of the Ninth Symphony.”<sup>82</sup>

Overt references to opera may be rare in Mahler, but a tendency to *Inszenierung* pervades his symphonic works. Clear sectional divisions, marked by differentiated character voices, proceed not unlike the sequence of scenes in a ballet or opera. The scene painting at the start of the first three symphonies is theatrically forceful,

but just as noticeable is the way in which the music moves on, or accrues from, a succession of scene changes. In the first movement of the Third, for example, the opening scene suggests a vast rocky space, characterized by echoing emptiness and occasional eruptive gestures in which motivic fragments struggle to find form or a sense of linear progression. But this is followed by a clear change of scene at Fig. 11. Like a ballet or a dramatized fairy tale, the lighting changes and new characters enter: violin tremolandi figures accompany a chorale-like passage in the flutes as a four-bar introduction to the “soloist,” the lyrical oboe melody, whose melody is then taken up by its *pas de deux* partner, the solo violin. In turn, these new characters are interrupted by a third group [Fig. 12], the pre-echo of the unruly crowd with their shrill marching band accompaniment and rumbling bass line. With the three principal groups thus presented in their own scenic spaces, Mahler then presents a restart [Fig. 13] and a new voice; the landscape of the first scene now becomes the background for the voice of the trombone solo. At first the trombone gives voice to the landscape itself, but as the movement progresses it becomes more human, adopting the mannerisms of an operatic soloist.

Mahler's scenic spaces remain separated rather than integrated on their returns in this movement. His use of the direction *Wie aus weiter Ferne* [Fig. 20] is not realized by any actual use of offstage instruments, as in the first movement of the First or the Finale of the Second Symphony, but is achieved instead by the dissociation of elements and the nonsimultaneity of musical fragments: the E flat clarinet and piccolo are instructed to play their little fanfare figures “*accelerando*” and “without attention to the beat.” The same effect is produced after Fig. 36, where the various groups “onstage” are differentiated instrumentally and thematically as the crowd comes into view. As if in parentheses, moments of a lyrical duet between violin and horn are heard between sightings of the approaching crowd [Figs. 39 and 41]. The March topic itself [Fig. 23] is a theatrical device such as one might find in a ballet or opera. That is to say, it is not musically linear or progressive in the sense of Beethovenian development but curiously static and scenic—a tableau—and builds its sense of momentum entirely through the force of orchestral expansion and gesture. It has nowhere to go musically, hence its end in structural collapse [Fig. 29] and the reprise of the violent negativity of the opening section.

Equally theatrical is the transition back to the Recapitulation [Fig. 55]. The raw energy of the march and the ensuing storm simply drains away as it physically passes off to stage left (basses), a musical process of strikingly visual and kinetic effect. This is not shaped by grammatical processes of musical closure; rather, a highly active and energetic but essentially static material is simply moved away into the distance. It subsides to the sound of several small side-drums, placed offstage and not bound into the tempo of the main orchestra; their “call to muster” is directed to be played “in the old march tempo, without attention to the cellos and basses.” This is a perfect example of how Mahler's symphonic form is in tension with a theatrical instinct. A theatrical logic would suggest that this should be a moment of arrival,

the inevitable climax of the wild march and storm; the demand of symphonic form for reprise at this point, however, returns us to the emptiness of the movement's opening, one completely opposed to the energy that has been reached by this point of the drama. The symmetrical element of sonata form is thus in almost impossible tension with its tendency toward a progressive linear trajectory that the sonata and symphony had adopted since Beethoven.

The theatrical element in Mahler is by no means always linked to the idea of high drama. A slightly different aspect of Mahler's music comes into relief if one considers its overlap not with opera, but with operetta. Mahler's ambivalent attitude toward operetta has already been discussed (chapter 4), as has his professional exposure to a wider diversity of more popular genres, such as the *Ballette*, *Ballettpantomime*, *Ballettszene*, and *Tanzlegende* produced during his time at the Hofoper.<sup>83</sup> Max Kalbeck, reviewing the Fourth Symphony in 1902 was, according to Sandra McColl, concerned "not so much with music drama as with echoes of the ballet pantomime in his discussion of the purely instrumental movements." In his account of the first movement of the Fourth, Kalbeck described "a highly fanciful scene involving stock pantomime characters including Amor, a coquettish dancer, a mocker and Blondine."<sup>84</sup> Mahler may not have been unhappy with such an account. The childlike quality of the opening of the Fourth Symphony has much to do with the use of sleigh bells, whose fairy-tale aspect was well marked in ballet and pantomime music and which, as Raymond Knapp comments, represent an "intrusion of the non-symphonic into the symphony."<sup>85</sup> Mahler conducted a performance of the Fourth in Berlin on December 16, 1901, at the invitation of Richard Strauss, who prepared the orchestra before Mahler's arrival in the city. A letter from Mahler earlier that month refers to the "little bells" that Mahler had enclosed in a parcel. "I have arranged for this as I think you are unlikely to have such an instrument—used only for ballets—in your orchestra."<sup>86</sup>

A combination of theatrical characterization and a scenic construction of musical episodes often defines the middle movements of Mahler's symphonies. After the gargantuan scale of its first movement, the second movement of the Third Symphony is a simple rustic minuet that evokes the kind of tableau that Kalbeck might have had in mind. The initial scene is given by the oboe melody with gentle pizzicato accompaniment, but, at Fig. 1, the lighting suddenly changes and a new character enters. The scene is shaped by a move from rustic simplicity, to something gently mysterious and magical, to something more exuberant and fantastical [Fig. 3], and then back again, a control of narrative progression effected entirely by the sequence of tableaux, just as in ballet, rather than any symphonic development. Elsewhere in Mahler's music we have songs without words, and theater without actors; here we have ballet without dancers. In the Scherzo of the Sixth Symphony, the different dances and character voices come and go like acts in a traveling circus as each group of players enters, performs, and exits, framed by clear introductory and closing gestures. This is not the only movement in Mahler's music where the composer appears

to take on the role of puppeteer, deploying his characters in a rather fantastic drama, characters that imitate the animal and human yet remain distant and mechanical at the same time.

## Symphony

If Mahler's music is so often rooted in the theater, from opera to operetta and ballet-pantomime, how does such a visual and dramatic sense sit alongside the demands of the symphony? Donald Mitchell once suggested that Mahler found his voice in *Das klagende Lied*. While stylistically this may be true, the work is striking for its resistance to a principle of unifying order implied by the idea of a single voice. Symphonic order eluded Mahler for a further ten years and, as the genesis of the first three symphonies shows, troubled him for at least another ten after that. The profusion of hybrid forms in Mahler's early works and his own vacillation between symphonic poem and symphony, program and absolute music, point to a complex process of musical development. The First Symphony was probably completed over a short and intense period early in 1888, though almost certainly not written entirely during that time as Mahler claimed. *Todtenfeier*, destined to become the first movement of the Second Symphony, also was completed that year, originally conceived as the first movement of a symphony in C minor, later as a free-standing tone poem, then once more as the opening of a symphony, though the symphony as a whole was not completed for another six years.

Mahler's first period, the "*Wunderhorn* years," spans the twenty years from 1880–1900, two decades that account for his life between the ages of twenty and forty, often the most productive of a composer's life. But in that time he completed only three symphonies, no mean feat for a professional conductor perhaps (especially when one includes the songs and the early cantata), yet in the last ten years of his life he wrote a further eight symphonies (if one includes the almost completed Tenth and *Das Lied von der Erde*), as well as two further orchestral song cycles. One can hardly suggest that he was less busy during this period. The plurality and disjunction of Mahler's musical voices mark synchronically what he labored in time to overcome. Biographical studies may suggest reasons for the relative paucity of works from his earlier years, as compared to his contemporary Richard Strauss, for example, but the underlying problem was neither a psychological one nor the result of Mahler's hectic schedule in various theater appointments; primarily it was a historical problem of the Austro-German symphony.

When he presented his First Symphony in Budapest in 1889, Mahler was essentially unheard of as a composer. He had composed relatively few works, none of which had been published or received high-profile performances.<sup>87</sup> The premiere of the First Symphony was therefore a bold announcement of a hitherto unknown



composer, unprepared by performances or publication of smaller-scale pieces. Doubly bold, perhaps, was that Mahler's "symphony" was no straightforward contribution to that most central and prestigious of Austro-German musical forms. The well-documented history of its composition, first performances, and reception testifies to Mahler's self-doubts about what kind of composer he was and what sort of work he had composed. Its initial presentation in Budapest as a "Symphonic Poem in Two Parts" suggests both a desire to identify with the modernity of the (Straussian) symphonic poem and a corresponding distancing from the classicistic tradition of Brahms. In the end, of course, after commencing both the Second and Third symphonies as symphonic poems, Mahler acknowledged that he was a composer of symphonies after all, happy to distance himself from the Straussian tone poem and to identify himself with a tradition rooted in Beethoven.

The early self-doubt is laid out in both the music and the ways in which he chose to present it. After the disastrous premiere of his "Symphonic Poem in Two Parts" on November 20, 1889, in Budapest, the work lay dormant for four years. In 1893 Mahler revised it extensively for a second performance on October 27, 1893 in Hamburg, under the title *Titan—Eine Tondichtung in Symphonie-Form*. Still divided into two parts, each of the five movements now had its own title and detailed programmatic commentary. The following year, the work was performed more or less in this version (June 3, 1894, in Weimar), though with the addition of a fourth player to each woodwind section and three extra horns. Two years later in Berlin (March 16, 1896) the work received its fourth performance but was now reduced to four movements (without the "Blumine" movement), none of which had titles or programmatic descriptions and which were collected under the simple title "Symphony in D major for full orchestra." The work was finally published, in this form, in 1898.<sup>88</sup>

Mahler's own ambivalence about symphony versus tone poem, and absolute music versus program music, was amplified in the critical reception of the work. When the First Symphony was performed in 1909 in New York, American critics complained that the work was not intelligible without the program. "Strictly speaking, the work is not a symphony at all, but rather a characteristic orchestral suite.... The four movements have no definite relation one to the other, and might be played independently."<sup>89</sup> In this they echoed the complaints of Mahler's Viennese critics nine years earlier. One might have some sympathy with both, because the complaint is provoked by more than the knowledge that an earlier program had subsequently been withdrawn; the music presents itself as if it were dramatic and theatrical, as if it were shaped by events and characters that, in its final version, seem to be concealed.

The nature of this criticism makes clear that Mahler was perceived to have broken an unspoken "generic contract" between composer and audience.<sup>90</sup> Robert Hirschfeld, in 1909, called the First Symphony a "satire of the symphony"<sup>91</sup> and, in a review of the Third, concluded, "The joke-symphony—that's Mahler's special musical preserve."<sup>92</sup> The Fourth Symphony was "hissed by audiences and savaged

by the press” because, as Stephen Hefling points out, “most early hearers thought it a scandalous hoax.”<sup>93</sup> The recurrent complaint of critics was that, under the guise of a symphony, Mahler foisted upon his audience music that was simply unsymphonic. August Spanuth, writing in the *Boston Evening Transcript* in 1906, expressed a common sense of outrage: “Sometimes, as in the first movement of the third symphony, when after a tremendously imposing and mysterious passage, a simple and gay march-melody, fit for an operetta, strikes the ear, one feels at the moment like striking the composer in return.”<sup>94</sup> But it is clear, given his difficult path toward symphonic composition, that Mahler had not used the generic title either lightly or ironically (notwithstanding, several critics referred to the First Symphony as Mahler’s *Sinfonia ironica*). The tension between composer and his critics points to a genuine divergence of view, not just on the nature of symphonic composition, but also on the cultural values enshrined in that tradition.

Mahler’s critics projected their ire onto the composer himself; a longer historical view is more inclined to see this tension as symptomatic of the age. Jeffrey Kallberg is surely right to suggest that “composers have often turned to generic hybrids at times when their personal styles were undergoing significant changes”<sup>95</sup> (an idea that might well be applicable to Mahler in his formative years), but one might also extend this idea and say that hybrid genres flourish in times of more general cultural change. Mahler’s critics were hostile not so much because they failed to understand the nature of his music, but, rather, because they instinctively opposed what they heard. Their problem was neatly summed up more recently by Raymond Monelle in discussing the Fourth Symphony: “In invoking signs of ‘symphony’ and simultaneously denying them, this symphony is occupied in proclaiming itself not a symphony.”<sup>96</sup> Monelle’s argument is that Mahler exacerbates to breaking point a historical tension latent in the symphony since its inception, which he characterizes as that between structure and genre. The first of these is understood in terms of the symphony’s claim to an abstract formal unity; the second refers to the increasing tendency of nineteenth-century composers to embrace self-contained “characteristic” material (such as the use of dance genres in Tchaikovsky). “Structure and genre are finally irreconcilable. The attempt to encompass both within a single texture was bound, in the end, to destroy musical coherence.... Genre—the guilty secret of metaphoric complicity—destroyed the symphony.” Abstract symphonic teleology lapses into episodic particularity.<sup>97</sup>

The program for the Second Symphony may have been revoked by Mahler, but the theatrical conception to which it had pointed is still heard clearly in the music. It is symptomatic of Mahler’s dramatic and scenic conception of the symphony that the first movement, even though conceived originally as a tone poem, remains in many ways the most like “absolute music.” Far more than the First Symphony, the Second presents a bewildering sequence of different voices and different ways of telling. Despite the triumphal affirmation of its ending, the symphony as a whole presents two parallel structural instincts that are never wholly reconciled—one dramatic,

developmental, and teleological, the other variational, heterogeneous, and episodic. John Williamson has demonstrated this same tension in the first movement of the Seventh Symphony, emphasizing the way the music resists organic unity and devolves into episodes that contrast rather than cohere with one another.<sup>98</sup> He compares Mahler's music to a sequence of Nietzsche's aphorisms, as a "range of peaks" without connecting links, episodes without any transitional material that would mediate their differences. He relates this directly to Mahler's mixing of genres that produces a sense of incomplete structure through the use of "interwoven genres, funeral march, quick march, song, chorale, bird-song, natural noises."<sup>99</sup> Even sonata form itself just becomes another generic type, one among several that constitute the mix of elements within the movement. Robert P. Morgan suggests that the result of such genre mixing is the operation in Mahler's music of a *force majeure* by which extraneous materials interrupt the symphonic process.<sup>100</sup> This suggests both an element of force, or even of coercion, on the part of the composer, but it also implies the breaking of the very generic contract on which the symphony is built.

It is this breach of contract, above all, to which Mahler's critics objected. Unconsciously, perhaps, they also reacted against the way that such works seem to propose a quite different model of the musical subject to the heroic paradigm of the Beethovenian symphony. Raymond Knapp makes the radical suggestion that the Third Symphony was an attempt "to conceive a symphonic structure of individual narratives in which subjectivity is overtly cast not as a participant, but as a mute listener."<sup>101</sup> A similar idea is implied by Peter Franklin's suggestion that, in the Fifth Symphony, "Mahler opted for a rhetoric that brings to the foreground a constructed musical subjectivity whose task is to control and unify the protean character changes that define its discourse."<sup>102</sup> Elsewhere, I have suggested that the Ninth Symphony is better understood as the foregrounding of a subject-in-process than the narrative adventures of some fixed subjective identity.<sup>103</sup> All three of these viewpoints converge on the idea that Mahler's symphonies "perform" the idea of subjectivity and in doing so recognize a gap between the narrative act and the (fictional) content of what is told. They come close to Lawrence Kramer's summary of Paul de Man's account of literary narrative, which necessarily foregrounds the process of its own narration and tells "in effect, two stories: one referential, the other a story about storytelling."<sup>104</sup>

If Mahler's critics were bewildered by the plural voices of his music, its eclectic and apparently disparate play of musical genres and narrative strategies, worse still was that these were brought together *in the symphony*. The most audible and shocking manifestation of this was Mahler's introduction of the kind of vulgar material that the symphonic tone was meant to soar above. To be sure, the classical symphony was predicated on the absorption of popular materials, from the singing allegro themes of the opera buffa to the rustic character of the minuet, but such absorption meant transformation and thus a kind of aesthetic distancing from the mundanity of its sources. The undiluted use of "plebeian" musical elements in the

Mahlerian symphony was of a different order. As Henry-Louis de La Grange asks: "How could these brutal contrasts and snatches of band music be regarded as anything but a profanation of the symphonic genre?"<sup>105</sup> Nor was this merely a matter of the oversensitive ears of Mahler's contemporary listeners; Pierre Boulez underlined that the stylistic opposition remains a forceful one for today's audiences: "The difficulty for Mahler's 'reader' is unquestionably caused by the split between gesture and material; the gesture is inclined to become ever more 'grandiose,' whereas the material is in danger of sliding down ever deeper into 'vulgarity.'"<sup>106</sup>

What Mahler's critics chose to ignore, perhaps, was that the symphony since Beethoven had been defined by the tension between the particularity of the material and the abstract logic of the form. When Max Kalbeck referred, in 1900, to Mahler's First Symphony as a "*Sinfonica Ironica*,"<sup>107</sup> he nevertheless drew attention to this historical tension, one that remains a constituent part of Mahler's music. Like Brahms before him, Mahler was hardly unaware of the problem of writing a post-Beethoven symphony; he was anxious enough about the obvious parallel with Beethoven's Ninth to hesitate about deploying voices in the Finale of the Second.<sup>108</sup> In fact, as Mark Evan Bonds and others have pointed out, the first four of Mahler's symphonies all relate directly to the model of Beethoven's Ninth, albeit through a process of "deliberate misreading."<sup>109</sup> While the Second Symphony is the only one of these to use choral voices in the Finale, all four progress toward a transcendental finale in which themes from earlier movements are often recalled. As Bonds underlines, the original title for the Finale of the First Symphony, "Dall'inferno all' paradiso," assumes a similar *per aspera ad astra* program to Beethoven's Ninth and ends "with a chorale-like theme whose character is decidedly vocal."<sup>110</sup> The same is clearly true of the Third, with its evolutionary ascent from raw nature to the chorale of the Finale, whose main theme, given to the strings in close scoring, Peter Franklin describes as "an idealization of human, *singing* euphony."<sup>111</sup>

Whereas the first three symphonies take on the Beethovenian form in order to wrestle through to the same kind of finale affirmation as their model, the Fourth Symphony deploys the form while retreating from its tone. As David Schiff comments, "the Fourth...adheres most closely to the formal scheme of the Ninth—and departs most strikingly from its ethos."<sup>112</sup> Its deliberately naive Finale, suggests Bonds, "represents a decided de-monumentalization of the genre" and "radically subverts the nineteenth-century's idea of the symphony as a monumental, heroic genre, countering grandeur with intimacy, optimism with ambivalence."<sup>113</sup> The extent of the parallels is belied by the apparently fairy-tale world of the Fourth; yet, as Bonds points out, both finales set utopian texts about heavenly joy, both have slow third movements constructed on a set of double variations, and both have first movements that begin outside the tonic with uncertain tonalities centered on an open fifth.<sup>114</sup>

What Mahler's critics sensed correctly, and which aroused their hostility, was that the Beethovenian model was being invoked but somehow simultaneously

undermined. As Bonds points out, Mahler's Fourth shares with Beethoven's Ninth a mixture of genres, but "the graft is antithetical to the symphony's traditional aesthetics of monumentality."<sup>115</sup> Perhaps the most obvious of these, which deflates and reverses the grand culmination of Beethoven's Finale, is Mahler's use of a simple solo song that fades out by way of ending. Mahler's symphony appears to take on a Beethovenian model in that the first three movements point toward the Finale and symphonic expectations are fulfilled by thematic transformations across all four movements, but at the same time this teleological expectation is radically undermined. To be sure, the symphony employs progressive tonality, "but progressive tonality had never been used in conjunction with a *piano* closing, and never against such a firmly established pattern of internal contradiction."<sup>116</sup> David Schiff likens Mahler's symphony to Schoenberg's Second String Quartet in this regard. "The two works are closely related to each other; Schoenberg's quartet can be heard as a commentary on Mahler's symphony, and both invoke a common source, Beethoven's Ninth. The sequence of movements in the Ninth—sonata-allegro, scherzo, variations, vocal-finale, is the model for both works."<sup>117</sup>

The pervasive influence of Wagner on Mahler's reception of Beethoven can be felt in a letter from Mahler to Max Marschalk (March 26, 1896) about the issue of programs in symphonic music. Mahler wrote: "I am sure we now stand at a great parting of the ways, where the divergent paths of symphonic and dramatic music will soon become obvious."<sup>118</sup> He goes on, however, to suggest that a way forward lies in the enriching of one by the other, suggesting that he remained ambivalent, as well he might in the year that he completed the Third Symphony. As we have already seen (in chapter 4), the example of Berlioz's approach to the "dramatic symphony" remained powerful for Mahler and was undoubtedly more so than the false antitheses of symphonic and dramatic music with which Wagner's writings are marred. It becomes clear that the tension between instrumental and texted music, autonomous symphonic music and narrative music drama, is no more reconciled by Wagner's works (musical and theoretical) than by Mahler's symphonies. Indeed, Mahler's interpretation of Wagner turns out to be every bit as contradictory as Wagner's interpretation of Beethoven.

In many ways, Mahler's relationship to Wagner recalls the metaphor Mahler himself once applied to that between himself and Richard Strauss—of two miners tunneling into the same mountain but from opposite sides. Both wrestled with the tension between, on the one hand, the claims of an autonomous, symphonic process with all of its associations of organic unity, logical development, and formal coherence and, on the other hand, a music that Abbate describes as "semantically generated, musically audacious, and *au fond* inexplicable in purely musical terms."<sup>119</sup> Wagner's claim to a "symphonic opera" is thus mirrored by the "operatic symphony" of Mahler. Consider how well the passage below, Abbate's assessment of dramatic tension in act 2, scene 5 of *Götterdämmerung*, might apply to the "scenes" of Mahler's symphonic music:

The musical dynamic of the scene does not reside in an evocation of form but in a metamorphosis over time. Gestures that at first are intrusive, illogical, unreconciled with what precedes and follows them are gradually assimilated and finally consumed in engendering the 'symphonic' musical juggernaut of the finale. In this metamorphosis is lodged whatever meaning the music may have. An anti-symphonic principle, one that twists music to serve the meaning of the words it accompanies, yields to a symphonic principle that addresses conventional musical canons of closure, coherence, motivic interrelationship. The Conspiracy Scene is an extended metaphor for the antithesis between two musical-aesthetic principles; it is an argument that gives the symphonic principle the final word.<sup>120</sup>

A similar tension between gesture and structure shapes Mahler's plural and equivocal approach to sonata form, arguably the central pillar of symphonic structure. Richard Kaplan draws attention to "sonata functions" in Mahler rather than sonata form as such, suggesting that the expectations of the form are subject to constant self-critique.<sup>121</sup> In the first movement of the First Symphony, for example, "sonata principle is treated as one of several organizational strands that interweave throughout the movement."<sup>122</sup> In the first movement of the Fourth Symphony the classical model of sonata form is self-consciously performed, overdetermined by formal and stylistic markers, and marked by outward observance rather than inward dynamism.

The Sixth Symphony positions itself in a similarly self-conscious relationship to the symphonic tradition. No other Mahler symphony appears, outwardly, to be so rooted in the conventional expectation of a four-movement form, starting and ending with an allegro and scored for instruments alone. Perhaps only Mahler's doubt about the placing of the slow movement suggests some distance from the classical model, and even then his decision to place it third, after the scherzo, brings back the specter of Beethoven's Ninth. The first movement of this most symphonic of Mahler's symphonies engages directly and deliberately with the idea of a sonata form first movement, based moreover on the opposition of two kinds of material (the brutal march that forms the first subject and the impassioned lyrical theme that forms the subject). But the two kinds of material do not enter into the discursive dialogue and working out that the classical model assumes; they remain resolutely separated until the end. And the basic premise of the sonata form, that of linear progression away from its starting point and the drama of its "higher" return, is observed only outwardly—the hollow shell of a classical symphonic sonata form no longer informed from within. This is most obvious in the way that the sense of tonal progression, on which the classical form is based, is resolutely avoided in this movement. The Beethovenian idea, that a second subject marks the point of arrival at a new key, to which an involved process of transition has been leading, is not fulfilled in Mahler's form. Instead, the tonal fixity of the march that forms the

first subject remains rooted to the spot in A minor—creating the definitive tension of this opening section, of a march that goes nowhere, of a brutal force marching on the spot. In place of the genuine linear process of sonata form, Mahler presents blocks of musical material that are dynamic only on the musical surface. Moreover, their character and formal function contract into “types”—the putatively dynamic march versus the self-contained lyrical voice that follows. Both are exaggerated and overdetermined. Between them, a dissociated chorale passage underlines that it does not realize any functional transition.<sup>123</sup>

While first and last movements are generally structured around sonata, sonata-rondo, or rondo forms, the inner movements, as discussed earlier, tend toward the episodic and scenic structures of ballet. Peter Franklin, discussing Mahler's original plan of the movements intended for the Third Symphony, suggests that they resemble “a suite of what look like post-Schumannesque Romantic nature-pieces” and goes on to describe them as “characteristic genre-studies.”<sup>124</sup> This is a constant tension of Mahler's inner movements: that the self-contained nature of each one of them, when juxtaposed as a group, will tend toward the looseness of the suite rather than the taut formal logic expected of the symphony. Writing on the second movement of the Third Symphony, Franklin suggests that “Mahler had come to regard the internal movements of the old symphonic suite as comprising an ‘interlude’ which was outside the engaged present-tense of its dramatic narration.”<sup>125</sup> The outer movements, by such a model, are understood to enact the dramatic events of the symphony; its inner movements, in contrast, are cast in a different “tense,” constituting moments of reminiscence, anticipation and of a fantastical dimension outside of the dramatic time of the outer movements.<sup>126</sup>

The historical tension at the heart of Mahler's symphonies may be approached by suggesting that in these works the late-nineteenth-century idea of the autonomous symphony, retrospectively pinned to Beethoven, comes into conflict with the dramatic symphony as understood by Hector Berlioz. It is primarily the latter, rather than Wagnerian music drama, that provides Mahler with a precedent for a fusing of symphonic and operatic elements. We have already considered the plural genres on which Berlioz draws in works like the *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Lélio*, *Roméo et Juliette*, and *Harold en Italie*. *Roméo et Juliette* was subtitled a “symphonie dramatique”; *Lélio*, a “monodrame lyrique”; *Le Damnation de Faust*, a “légende dramatique” (though also as an “opéra du concert”). Berlioz insisted in the preface to *Roméo et Juliette* (1839) that “although voices are often employed, this is not a concert opera, nor a cantata, but a symphony with chorus.” Jeffrey Langford insists that the connection to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, implied here by Berlioz, is not nearly as important as the connection to opera, and he specifically relates Berlioz's scenic technique in *Roméo et Juliette* to “the ballet-pantomime scenes prevalent in French opera of the period.”<sup>127</sup> Federico Celestini quotes Schumann's comment that the five movements of the *Symphonie Fantastique* are like the five movements of a classical play; more particularly, Celestini suggests, they are like the five acts of

a French Grand Opéra.<sup>128</sup> Berlioz himself suggested that the program was like the “spoken text of an opera,” and that the extra timpani and bells are drawn directly from the opera orchestra.

Langford has made a persuasive case for understanding these works as the response of a theatrical composer whose path to being a successful opera composer had been unnaturally blocked. “Is there any doubt,” asks Langford about *Roméo et Juliette*, “that Berlioz was vicariously enjoying through this ‘symphony’ the operatic opportunity that had long eluded him in the Académie?”<sup>129</sup> The overlap between the two forms is brought out by Henry-Louis de La Grange, who argues not only that Berlioz’s symphonies are shaped by the dramatic concerns of opera, but also that the operas often deploy a purely orchestral voice at points of maximum expressive need. “It is not surprising,” he suggests, “that the two most moving passages in *The Trojans*—the appearance of Andromache in the second scene of the first Act and the King’s hunt in the third—do not use vocal parts . . . and that in *Roméo et Juliette* both the principal characters are represented not through singers, but through instruments.”<sup>130</sup>

If the historical tension between Mahler’s symphonies and Beethoven’s is worked out in Mahler’s treatment of sonata form and the apparently self-contained nature of the inner movements, it is in the finale that he necessarily confronts head-on the most pressing problem of the Beethovenian form. This is most obviously exacerbated in Mahler’s staging of affirmative finales that, increasingly, question their own affirmative voice. The Finale of the First Symphony enacts a literary, programmatic drama in which the threat of catastrophe is reversed by its affirmative conclusion; that of the second draws explicitly on the spatial resources of a theatrically conceived music. The Finale of the Third, Mahler’s first sustained example of an Adagio voice, proposes that a transcendent spiritual arrival may, at the same time, be realized in a ritualized, collective form. The Fourth, famously, concludes with the same idea of an achieved heavenly unity but is couched not in the “noble” symphonic tone of the Third, but the deliberately naive voice of the *Wunderhorn* poetry.

The Finales of the Fifth and the Seventh Symphonies (discussed in chapter 3) build powerfully affirmative conclusions, but the plural nature of their rondo forms and their self-consciously constructed nature embody a quite different attitude toward the innocent youthful drama of the First Symphony. David B. Greene, discussing the Finale of the Fifth, comments on the curious emptiness at the heart of its concluding affirmation. “The brass chorale seems more to allude to the brass chorale at the end of the second movement than to project a fulfillment of that which has putatively summoned it. The orchestration, the tonality and even the melody recalls the earlier chorale, whose luminosity is far more glorious and brilliant. In fact, the finale climax is not so much a climax as the recollection of a climax.”<sup>131</sup> In the case of the Seventh Symphony, the Finale sounds out a similarly powerful statement of affirmation, with its unison horns pealing like celebratory bells and its brass evocation of Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*, but it does so as one voice among many in a sectional music without the logic of necessity so powerfully implied in middle



period Beethoven. A movement such as this, which draws attention at every turn to its own structural hiatuses and ruptures, to its non sequiturs and tangential sequence of ideas, at the same time undermines the claim of its own affirmative voice.

If the finales of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies both lend themselves to such a deconstructive reading, the Sixth and Eighth, between which they are interleaved, make very different statements. The Sixth wrestles repeatedly with and against the necessity to forge an affirmative conclusion, dramatizing in extreme form its own failure to do so. The Eighth, by contrast, revisits the spatialized theological and pantheistic affirmation of arrival explored in the Second and Third symphonies. Its monumental and ecclesiastical theatricality, pounded home by the timpani strokes of the final E flat major conclusion, remains overwhelming in its effect nearly a century after its first performance. Only in the three late works, the Ninth and Tenth symphonies and *Das Lied von der Erde*, does Mahler find a way to balance the act of making an expressive ending without a rhetoric that cannot help but draw attention to its own worn and contingent status. The sense that Mahler's symphonies represent a kind of historical endpoint is itself expressed in these finales. Rudolf Stephan reflected that what comes to an end here is the whole nineteenth-century bourgeois aesthetic embodied in the symphonic genre: "This end is not a matter of simple chronology; in Mahler the genre was fulfilled (and liquidated)."<sup>132</sup> Peter Franklin expressed something very similar in his suggestion that the Ninth Symphony was "a symbolically terminal statement of the tradition in which Mahler worked."<sup>133</sup> Both echo the substance of Adorno's 1960 monograph. This is not simply to do with Mahler's musical materials, which were common property of composers of the fin de siècle and, in any case, not as harmonically radical as those of his younger counterparts in Vienna. It is that his musical disjunctions are deployed within a context that still aspires to classical unities. This tension had always defined the historical tradition on which Mahler draws; it is what accounts for the "modernity" of Beethoven's formal and rhetorical disjunctions. To borrow Rudolf Stephan's terms, in Mahler's music the self-critique of the symphonic form, already explicit in Beethoven, "fulfils" itself and, in doing so, "liquidates" itself.

# 6

## Ways of Telling

### Literary Voices

The idea that Mahler's symphonies show a kinship to literature has always been part of their reception. Among Mahler's contemporaries, Richard Strauss appears to have spoken of Mahler's music as literature on at least one occasion;<sup>1</sup> Richard Specht pointed out in 1905 that Mahler had first thought of being a poet rather than a composer and suggests that his extra year at university might have been linked to this indecision.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Theodor Adorno advanced the idea that Mahler's symphonies were like novels, which has since been widely taken up.<sup>3</sup> Pierre Boulez, for example, suggested of Mahler that "his vision and his technique have the epic dimension of the narrator: procedures as well as material ally him above all with the novelist. The word symphony functions merely as a label."<sup>4</sup> Mahler's symphonies are not novels; neither do they tell stories in any literal way, but they are like novels and are constructed from materials shaped in temporal structures that appear similar to the presentation of characters and the unfolding of a plot. In this Mahler is not without precedent, but he was certainly at odds with the tendency in the latter part of the nineteenth century to choose between the narrative assumptions of the tone poem and the absolute presumptions of the symphony. Mahler's distance to both Brahms and Bruckner in this respect illustrates the point. To find any symphonic precedent, one would need to look back, as Kurt Blaukopf does, to the dramatic symphonies of Berlioz. Both composers, he suggested, employ a treatment of thematic variation throughout a work such that "the themes may be compared to the characters in a novel, whose appearance changes with their experiences in the course of the story."<sup>5</sup>

Mahler's relationship to literature was as significant and as intense as Schumann's, though just as resistant to a reductive reading that tries to suggest any specific connections of plot or character between musical work and literary model.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the relationship of Mahler to specific writers offers potentially rich insights into his approach to musical form and process. One of the most productive of such parallels between music and literature is to be found between Mahler's

music and the novels of Dostoyevsky. Despite Bruno Walter's tantalizing comment that "in the conversation between Ivan and Aliosha from *The Brothers Karamazov* we find a fundamental expression of all that I have called Mahler's world-sorrow,"<sup>77</sup> it is in terms of narrative strategies rather than specific materials that this parallel is most productive as an approach to Mahler's music. It is on this level that one might look for some musical evidence of Richard Specht's assertion that Mahler's encounter with Dostoyevsky's novels was "an experience of determining force."<sup>78</sup>

Constantin Floros, perhaps picking up on Walter's suggestion, draws a link between the theme of eternal love in the Finale of the Third Symphony and the sermon on love by Starez Sossima in *The Brothers Karamazov*.<sup>9</sup> But as Inna Barssowa has argued, the strongest links between Mahler and Dostoyevsky are in terms of their similar constructive principles—the idea of an unending development of the consciousness of the protagonist, the shaking of the foundation of that consciousness through dramatic turns and catastrophes, to make a narrative structure poised "on the threshold of completion or catastrophe."<sup>10</sup> Consider, for example, the abrupt reversals common to both Mahler's symphonies and Dostoyevsky's novels, where high emotional tension is suddenly discharged into its opposite condition,<sup>11</sup> the juxtaposition of extreme emotional states,<sup>12</sup> scenes of grotesque humor and a bewildering plurality of voices,<sup>13</sup> the narration of stories within the story,<sup>14</sup> or the use of idyllic reminiscence as a distancing device.<sup>15</sup> Adorno sums it up with characteristic sharpness: "It is not that music wants to narrate, but that the composer wants to make music in the way that others narrate."<sup>16</sup>

A key figure in such a reading is once again Mikhail Bakhtin, whose theory of the carnivalesque we considered in chapter 4. Bakhtin's criticism is not concerned with any link to music, and the categories he draws out of Dostoyevsky's work certainly do not provide a list of any simple influences or points of imitation for Mahler. It is rather that Dostoyevsky, Mahler, and Bakhtin usefully "triangulate," in that each point is better plotted by reference to the other two. Bakhtin's work was largely written in the 1920s; Dostoyevsky's, in the 1880s. Mahler's work falls chronologically between the two and is itself analytical in that it draws out *musically* categories that parallel some of the terms Bakhtin went on to develop in literary criticism. Mahler's symphonies, like Bakhtin's later analysis of the novel, draw out metatextual concerns; they explore the conditions of making expressive propositions and developing narrative through character and plot; and they bring to a point of analytical self-awareness the constituent tensions of their own highly reflexive forms. Well before the Russian formalists deployed the concept of *ostranenie*, Mahler had highlighted the idea of a radical defamiliarization of the ordinary in his use of popular materials.<sup>17</sup>

Bakhtin related his idea of a "multi-voiced" or "polyphonic" novel directly to the nature of the society that produced it. The epoch itself, he claimed, made the polyphonic novel possible because of the multileveled aspect of the time, the contradictions between different planes and different groups of people, and its

state of “coexistence and interaction” rather than evolution. Mahler’s work, like Dostoyevsky’s, might be seen as responding to “the objective complexity, contradictoriness and multi-voicedness” of the society in which he lived. One aesthetic manifestation of this in Dostoyevsky’s work is the frequent occurrences of paired doubles, presented as a simultaneity of opposites:<sup>18</sup>

This stubborn urge to see everything as coexisting, to perceive and show all things side by side and simultaneous, as if they existed in space and not in time, leads Dostoyevsky to dramatize, in space, even internal contradictions and internal stages in the development of a single person—forcing a character to converse with his own double, with the devil, with his own alter ego, with his own caricature (Ivan and the Devil, Ivan and Smerdyakov, Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, and so forth).<sup>19</sup>

Mahler’s music may often be read productively as just such a conversation “with his own double, with the devil, with his own alter ego, with his own caricature.” One might read this in directly psychological terms, treating the musical work as the writing out of the composer’s own double voice, but I am more interested here in how the music proposes the paired opposites we encounter at every turn—of high and low, sublime and banal, passionate affirmation and ironic annihilation. Norbert Loeser, discussing this parallel between Mahler and Dostoyevsky as early as 1950, underlined their mutual opposition of the epic and dramatic, of an anachronistic disposition with a revolutionary modernity, and the pairing of the naive and child-like with a penetrating intellectuality.<sup>20</sup>

Bakhtin continues, in terms that might be applied directly to Mahler’s music:

This trait finds its external expression in Dostoyevsky’s passion for mass scenes, his impulse to concentrate, often at the expense of credibility, as many persons and themes as possible in one place at one time, that is, his impulse to concentrate in a single moment the greatest possible qualitative diversity.... And hence the catastrophic swiftness of action, the “whirlwind motion,” the dynamics of Dostoyevsky. In every voice he could hear two contending voices, in every expression a crack, and the readiness to go over immediately to another contradictory expression; in every gesture he detected confidence and lack of confidence simultaneously; he perceived the profound ambiguity, even multiple ambiguity, of every phenomenon.<sup>21</sup>

For Bakhtin, this is not a dialectical phenomenon (moving toward some resolution), but is experienced as “an eternal harmony of unmerged voices or as their unceasing and irreconcilable quarrel.” This is both a difference to Mahler’s music (which aspires toward a temporal reconciliation of its own oppositions) and also

the source of its definitive tensions (in that his music also blocks such reconciliation and allows its dualities to persist). The alternation of the double variations that make up the Finale of the Ninth provide a good example of both tendencies, producing a work that “is reluctant to close”<sup>22</sup> and that fades out rather than ends.<sup>23</sup> In the preceding movement, the Rondo Burlesque, can be found a late statement of Mahler’s “passion for mass scenes” and “his impulse to concentrate in a single moment the greatest possible diversity.” It not only brings together the crowds of the Second, Third or Fifth symphonies, but it also undoes what seemed too well ordered in the Eighth; all the ironic voices of the earlier scherzo movements, each ready “to go over immediately to another contradictory expression” are drawn together here in a counterpoint that fails to achieve its integrative purpose.

Mahler’s symphonies surely come close to Bakhtin’s idea of the novel as defined by “a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.”<sup>24</sup> Kurt Blaukopf presumably meant something similar when he suggested that Mahler’s symphonies form a cycle that is a “musical counterpart to Balzac’s *Comédie humaine*.”<sup>25</sup> But the effect comes not just from the presence of different voices in the work—Mahler’s insistence that the symphony “should embrace the world”—but also from “the dialogic angle at which these styles and dialects are juxtaposed or counterposed in the work.”<sup>26</sup> The force of both novel and symphony comes not simply from the simultaneity of different voices, but also from their constant opposition to the point of nonresolution. The central opposition of the nineteenth century, manifest in both novel and symphony, is that of the individual voice and the collective, the constantly renegotiated tension of the private and the public, the subjective experience and the objective world. Leon Botstein has suggested a link between Mahler and Flaubert based on this opposition.<sup>27</sup> He discusses a scene in *Madame Bovary* in which the heterophony of an agricultural fair is contrasted with the encounter between Emma and Rodolphe, in which “Flaubert achieves a nearly symphonic simultaneity”<sup>28</sup> of the outward objective bustle and the interior subjectivity of the two main characters. This simultaneity is achieved, Botstein suggests, by the juxtaposition of different materials but also by different temporal frames, a definitive strategy in Mahler’s approach to symphonic music.

Before about 1900, one of Mahler’s most significant literary interests was the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, undoubtedly shaped by his lifelong friendship with Siegfried Lipiner. It was while he was a student in Vienna, in 1877 or 1878, that Mahler first met Lipiner through his association with members of the *Leseverein der deutschen Studenten*. Lipiner had studied with Gustav Fechner and was an enthusiastic Nietzschean. It was through Lipiner that the members of the *Leseverein* sent Nietzsche a birthday greeting on his thirty-third birthday in October 1877. It was certainly Lipiner who shaped Mahler’s reading of Nietzsche between 1891 and 1896, and Lipiner would appear to have been a key influence on the development of the Third Symphony. Federico Celestini suggests that Lipiner was “a kind of mentor

to Mahler,” giving him literary and philosophical guidance.<sup>29</sup> Constantin Floros suggests that two poems form Lipiner’s *Buch der Freude* (1880) have direct bearing on Mahler’s work on the Third Symphony. The subtitles that Mahler appended to each movement correspond to similar ideas in Lipiner’s poem “Genesis,” and the Finale of the Symphony shows fascinating parallels with Lipiner’s poem “Hymne.”<sup>30</sup> According to William J. McGrath, Mahler made “repeated declarations that his music was more closely related to Lipiner’s plays than anyone could ever know.”<sup>31</sup> In particular, Lipiner’s *Adam*, of which Mahler spoke very enthusiastically in his correspondence, has been linked to the Second, Third, and Tenth symphonies. On receiving a copy of the play from his friend, in June 1899, Mahler replied: “This is a totally Dionysian work! Believe me, no one else alive today, except me, will understand it.”<sup>32</sup> The following year he repeated the same sentiment: “No one will ever be able to understand you better than a musician, and I may specifically add: than *myself*. It sometimes seems to me quite a joke how closely my ‘music’ is related to yours. This has become particularly clear to me from *Adam*, which I am still steadily assimilating.”<sup>33</sup>

It may well be that Lipiner’s Nietzschean thought was more directly influential on Mahler than was Nietzsche himself, despite the setting of Zarathustra’s “Midnight Song” in the Third Symphony and Mahler’s initial idea, subsequently discarded, to title this symphony “Meine fröhliche Wissenschaft.” Nevertheless, a number of commentators have drawn parallels directly between Mahler’s work and Nietzsche’s. Peter Franklin quotes a passage from Nietzsche’s *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, entitled “The ‘Humanness’ of the Future,” as a kind of interpretative gloss on the Finale of the Third Symphony.<sup>34</sup> Others have underlined the wider influence of *The Birth of Tragedy* on this work, as also of Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation* and the work of Gustav Fechner.<sup>35</sup> Celestini underlines that “The Third Symphony is undoubtedly the work of Mahler’s in which the connection with Nietzsche appears most conspicuously,” but its religious direction is clearly at odds with this, suggesting that Mahler’s reception of Nietzsche was complex, partial, or simply contradictory.<sup>36</sup> Celestini underlines the importance of Lipiner’s 1878 lecture “Über die Elemente eine Erneuerung religiöser Ideen in der Gegenwart” (“On the Elements of a Renewal of Religious Ideas in the Present”) in which Lipiner, following Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, emphasizes “the redemptive function of the tragic annihilation of the self.” But Lipiner’s reading differs from that of Nietzsche, and Mahler’s use of the “Midnight Song” is, Celestini suggests, shaped by Lipiner’s interpretation rather than a reading of the poem based on its setting within Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* alone.<sup>37</sup> Further evidence of the important influence of this lecture on Mahler is given by Stephen Hefling, who suggests that it shapes the lines of text that Mahler added to the verses of Klopstock he later set in the Finale of the Second Symphony.<sup>38</sup>

It is also to Nietzsche’s reworking of Schopenhauer that Celestini traces Mahler’s aesthetic concern with the tragic, the ironic, and the grotesque, specifically in the idea of the “joy in the annihilation of individuation,” which lies at the

heart of Schopenhauer's philosophy and Wagner's aesthetic response to it. In Nietzsche's rendering of this idea in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the hero is destroyed in tragedy because his individuated form is necessarily temporary. By contrast, the satyr chorus of Dionysian tragedy is grotesque because of the contradictory elements of the satyrs and their lack of individuated form; the satyr, says Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is a "synthesis of god and goat." Celestini suggests that the unruly crowd of the first movement of the Third Symphony (specifically marked by Mahler as "Der Gesindel") is a version of the Dionysian chorus of the tragic drama, just as the prominent trombone solo, like the satyr, is half man, half beast. In the third movement of the same work, this ambivalence is played out in the relationship between the world of animals ("Ablösung im Sommer") and the world of man (the post horn episode).<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Celestini goes on to point out that Mahler's comment to Natalie Bauer-Lechner about animals living in the present, while human consciousness is always fleeing the present, not only relates directly to this movement (with the introduction of a backward-looking, wistful attitude in the post horn sections), but also comes directly from Nietzsche, via Lipiner.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear that Mahler's initial enthusiasm for Nietzsche later waned. Bruno Walter, who first met Mahler in 1894, sheds interesting light on how Mahler had shifted his position in nearly twenty years: "As for the latter's *Zarathustra*, one is inclined to say that Mahler felt attracted by the poetic fervour of the work and repelled by the essence of its thought. Nietzsche's anti-Wagnerianism aroused his indignation and, in later days, he turned away from him entirely."<sup>41</sup> That said, Martin Scherzinger points to evidence of Mahler's continuing admiration for aspects of Nietzsche's work. In a conversation with Bernard Scharlitt in 1906, Mahler is reported to have exclaimed about Nietzsche, "His *Zarathustra* originated in the spirit of music; indeed it is almost symphonically conceived." Scherzinger links this comment, a year after the completion of the Seventh Symphony, to a structural parallel between the Finale of the Seventh Symphony and a passage in Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*. In the chapter titled "The Seven Seals" Nietzsche evokes the idea of "the eternal return" by reference to the form of a rondo; the rondo Finale of the Seventh has, interestingly, seven ritornello returns.<sup>42</sup>

It was Lipiner's influence that stands behind the link between Mahler's *Totenfeier* and a play by the Polish writer Adam Mickiewicz. Stephen Hefling has demonstrated persuasively that Mahler's tone poem, subsequently the first movement of the Second Symphony, is closely related to Mickiewicz's drama (*Dziady*) as translated by his friend Lipiner. At the same time, it parallels closely events in Mahler's own life that, he suggests, may well be why Mahler chose not to make the link clear, despite having done so with other literary references.<sup>43</sup> Without recounting Hefling's detailed evidence, what emerges from his account is not only a further example of Mahler's blurring of the boundaries between his own life and his music, but a surprisingly radical case of Mahlerian intertextuality. In Mickiewicz's *Dziady* the hero, Gustav, takes his own life after his lover, Maria, marries someone else. As

a punishment, he is condemned to wander as a lost soul until Maria dies. In 1888, Mahler was in love with Marion von Weber, the wife of the composer's grandson.<sup>44</sup> As Hefling points out, this would not have been the first time that Mahler had developed a musical work out of a failed love affair (his relationship to Johanna Richter in Kassel, 1883–1885, was clearly formative for the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and thus the First Symphony too). Hefling's detailed account of the relationship between Mahler's *Todtenfeier* and Lipiner's translation of *Dziady* includes reference to one of the *Gesellen* songs ("Ich hab' ein glühend Messer"), the *Dies Irae* plainchant, and Goethe's poem "Meeresstille."<sup>45</sup> A scene in the poem, in which Gustav runs to Marie's house and sees her wedding celebrations through a window, just before he commits suicide, makes a clear link with Mahler's very similar comment about the Scherzo of the Second Symphony.

After his marriage to Alma Schindler in 1902, Mahler seems to have had little contact with his friend Lipiner. It is clear that he was one of a circle of Mahler's friends with whom Alma felt uncomfortable. Nevertheless, at the end of his life while in the United States, Mahler "tried hard to revive his old, though somewhat intermittent, friendship" with Lipiner, whose name appears in several letters of 1909 and 1910 from Mahler to Bruno Walter.<sup>46</sup> There is evidence to suggest that Lipiner's literary influence was again a formative presence in the composition of Mahler's last symphony. The third movement of the Tenth Symphony, entitled "Purgatorio oder Inferno," has been related to Lipiner's poem "Il Purgatorio." In the manuscript score, the bottom half of the first page of this movement is missing. Knud Martner speculates that this missing part may well have included a quotation from the poem by Lipiner and that Alma, no friend of Lipiner's, may have torn it out.<sup>47</sup>

But for all the tantalizing parallels between Mahler's music and nineteenth-century philosophy (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Gustav Fechner) and the nineteenth-century novel, Mahler's literary tastes centered very definitely around older literature; Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche were the most modern of his literary passions, which were otherwise directed almost exclusively at romantic authors. Of course, other composers looked back to the romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, but this was usually to transform them into a specifically modern idiom, as, for example, in Hugo Wolf's settings of Mörike or Goethe. Mahler's preoccupation with early romantic poetry is different: it has to do with a re-creation of the poetic vision of a much earlier age. He must surely have become more self-conscious of this after 1901 when he encountered, via Alma Schindler, the circle of Viennese modernists related to the Secession.<sup>48</sup> But he showed no interest in those modern poets beloved by Strauss or Schoenberg and his pupils in the early years of the new century (Otto Bierbaum, Detlev von Liliencron, Gustav Falke, Martin Greif, Karl Henckell, Richard Dehmel, Ferdinand Avenarius, Rainer Maria Rilke, Theodor Storm, Peter Altenberg, Otto Hartleben, Gerhart Hauptmann, Stefan George). The difference is nicely illustrated by the story that when Mahler recommended Dostoyevsky to the young circle around Schoenberg in 1904, Webern is reported to have



replied timidly, "But we do have Strindberg." The story is usually told at Webern's expense but might just as well be used to highlight Mahler's generational remove from the early modernists.

The literature with which Mahler engaged was thus emphatically "un-modern." Mahler's literary interests have often been noted by his biographers;<sup>49</sup> the list includes ancient Greek literature, Jakob Böhme, Angelus Silesius, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Racine, Molière, Sterne, Kant, Schelling, Lenau, Goethe, Hölderlin, Rückert, Jean Paul, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Eichendorff, Schopenhauer, Fechner, Wagner, Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, Lipiner, Tolstoy, and Ibsen.<sup>50</sup> Despite the presence of some more recent figures, the key authors in Mahler's literary world were romantics, writing a century or so before Mahler's own work. So how do we make sense of this apparently anachronistic turn, this backward look, in a composer who in many other respects appears abrasively modern? Answering such a question draws out a central element of Mahler's style and, thereby, a paradox of the aesthetic modernism of which he was part. Mahler's reactivation of the tensions of romanticism, in music as in literature, makes clear the connection between the two.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps the most recurrent literary parallel made by commentators is that between the character of Mahler (both the man and the music) and E. T. A. Hoffmann's fictional Kapellmeister, Johannes Kreisler. This has been a conceit of successive generations of commentators and, to some extent, persists because of the constant retelling. Felix Adler, writing of the *Nachtmusik* movements of the Seventh Symphony in 1908, is typical: "These movements are the composer's impressions of night: with their eerie coloring, strange mood changes, and bizarre harmonic ideas, these pieces could easily be the work of E. T. A. Hoffmann's ingenious Kapellmeister Kreisler."<sup>52</sup> Paul Stefan went rather further, suggesting in his study of Mahler (first published in 1910) that "Kreisler's rebirth on the level of earthly life is called Gustav Mahler."<sup>53</sup> In the same year, Edgar Istel suggested that Mahler had "in his nature some mystical-daemonic character—something like E. Th. A. Hoffmann's Kreisler."<sup>54</sup> The same link was made by both Richard Specht (1913) and Guido Adler (1916). Hermann Bahr, looking back on Mahler in 1920, the year of the Amsterdam Mahler Festival, referred to him as "this Jewish Kapellmeister Kreisler."<sup>55</sup> Max Steinitzer similarly recalled in retrospect that "Mahler could be so like Hoffmann's description of 'Kapellmeister Kreisler' in *Kater Murr* that it was quite uncanny."<sup>56</sup> More recently, this aspect of the Mahler myth was kept alive by Henry-Louis de La Grange; considering Mahler's accounts to Anton Krisper of his sufferings over the affair with Josephine Poisl in 1879, de La Grange comments that they "could have come from Hoffmann's Kapellmeister Kreisler."<sup>57</sup>

While the play of fantastical, supernatural, even daemonic elements was often cited as common ground between Mahler and Kreisler, it was principally a shared ironic tone that lay behind the comparison. When irony and humor are discussed in Mahler, the figure of Kreisler, and thus of Hoffmann, is never far behind. Max Kalbeck, reviewing a performance of the First Symphony in Vienna in November

1900, considered its prominent element of irony to be derived from Jacques Callot, via E. T. A. Hoffmann.<sup>58</sup> The music critic of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote similarly, after a Munich performance of the Fourth Symphony, that Mahler had clearly modeled himself on Callot, Hoffmann, Berlioz, and Liszt.<sup>59</sup> Of course, Mahler had given the lead here, in the subtitle given to the third movement of the First Symphony, a “Phantasiestück in Callots Manier.”<sup>60</sup> Ferdinand Pfohl suggested it was he who pointed Mahler in this direction, having bought Mahler a copy of Hoffmann’s book of the same title. A few days later, he relates, Mahler told him that he had found a title for the whole symphony—*Der Titan*.<sup>61</sup> Hans Redlich is just one of many commentators who accept this link. Writing of the Sixth Symphony, he says: “The scherzo’s mechanized horrors seem to stem from the world of E. T. A. Hoffmann’s ‘*Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier*.’ Its chief characteristic is its sinister artificiality.”<sup>62</sup>

Hoffmann’s insistence that the fantastical should be grounded in reality is the basis for the uncanny, disturbing element of his fiction. Mahler’s kinship with Hoffmann lies here, in his deformations of familiar materials (fanfares, marches, dances, popular musical styles). While opposed to the new verismo movement in opera, Mahler nevertheless draws frequently on elements of real life but always to create a sense of distance from the reality to which they point. In movements like the Scherzo of the Seventh Symphony, perhaps Mahler’s most Kreisleresque movement, the distant, distorted echoes of the ballroom recall something similar in Schumann’s piano music, though the proximity of the visionary and its grotesque distortion are closer to Berlioz.

But the most important parallel between Mahler and Hoffmann has to do with an approach to narrative and the idea of narrative voice, grounded in those same elements for which Hoffmann himself had praised Callot’s work—its abundance of motifs, heterogeneous elements, and exuberant fantasy.<sup>63</sup> The supernatural, the mechanical, the fantastical, and the dreamlike are all voices heard equally in both men’s works. An early letter from Mahler to Alma Schindler (December 5, 1901), in the early days of their courtship, sheds interesting light on his approach to Hoffmann, via Offenbach’s opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*, which he had conducted the previous evening: “Usually I conduct Acts 1 and 2 only with great reluctance.... Act 3 is more felicitous, for it has enough to offer—if one adds one’s own creative energy—to come close to the demonic element of its literary model. If you are interested to see how much has been lost, you should read Hoffmann’s novella ‘Rath Krespel.’” Significantly, Mahler goes on to criticize the interpretation of Marie Gutheil-Schoder for being too realistic: “Antonia does not simply die of consumption, as suggested by that accursed coughing, popular as it may be in theatrical circles. No, she forfeits her life to the demonic principle of art, a principle which, once it has taken hold of a person, invariably constrains them to abandon their individuality. Indeed, if a person is prone to spiritualization, it possesses them to the point of physical collapse.”<sup>64</sup>

Mahler's similarly passionate attachment to the fiction of Jean Paul Richter has often been noted by commentators, mostly in terms of the possible links between the latter's novel *Der Titan* and the First Symphony. Kurt Blaukopf insisted that while "Mahler knew and loved the writings of Jean Paul... anyone who has ever read any of the latter's works must conclude that there is no trace of his mannered style in Mahler's symphony."<sup>65</sup> He is directly contradicted by Donald Mitchell, among others, who quotes extensive passages from Jean Paul to demonstrate a similarity of tone and style with Mahler's symphony.<sup>66</sup> Blaukopf, however, might be on firmer ground because, according to the testimony of Mahler himself and others, the title was an afterthought. In a letter to Max Marschalk (March 20, 1896) about the *Titan* program to the First Symphony, Mahler was adamant that it came about because "my friends persuaded me to write some sort of programme notes to make the D major easier to understand."<sup>67</sup>

Most critics of Mahler's time played down the connection to Jean Paul, and Natalie Bauer-Lechner, for one, warned against taking it too literally. Nevertheless, Jean Paul's *Der Titan* (1801) does offer some suggestive parallels with Mahler's First Symphony (itself a kind of *Bildungsroman*). Its hero, the young Albano, longs to enter Pestitz, the capital city of the state of Hohenfliess; his father had always opposed this, preferring that his son should be brought up in a rural Carthusian monastery. We know that Mahler, the young pretender from rural and provincial origins, set his eyes early on Vienna as his ultimate prize. At the young age of twenty-four, in a letter to Albert Spiegler (January 23, 1885), Mahler had written: "But my ultimate goal is and must remain Vienna—there is nowhere else where I can feel at home."<sup>68</sup> The idea of being held back by one's origins is given a neat twist in the novel because in the end it turns out that Albano was swapped at birth with another baby and is actually the rightful Prince and heir of Hohenfliess and thus "belonged" in its capital city all along. When he discovers this, he goes out to the mountains to survey "the city which was to be the circus and theater of his powers." At the same time he celebrates the fact that "he belongs now to a German house" and that in his hands he has the power to fulfill all of his benign ideals for the betterment of the people. The parallel with Mahler's high sense of purpose and personal destiny in taking on his post at the Hofoper a decade after the First Symphony (though only four years after he added the Jean Paul reference) is clear enough.

As so often happens in these cases, commentators are quick to reduce a cultural and aesthetic parallel to a merely biographical and psychological one. Jost Hermand, for example, underlines the close similarities between Mahler's youth and that of Jean Paul: their mutual enthusiasm for books, that they were both largely self-taught, that they both lost a younger brother to suicide, that each had a close relationship with a sister, generally tough origins, and a tendency to turn autobiography into artistic work. Hermand underlines that Mahler's early letters are full of reminiscences of Jean Paul up to about 1895, both "paraphrases of youthful feeling" as well as some direct allusions and references:<sup>69</sup> "What must have fascinated him

especially was the apparent contradiction of oddly humoristic and seraphic feeling, the juxtaposition of irony, youthful demonstrativeness and the bitterest despair in the face of self-imposed ideals. Jean Paul was for him a spiritual landscape, which saved him from any kind of 'Einkräftigkeit,' allowing him to become neither a cynic nor a composer of sentimental moods."<sup>70</sup>

Undoubtedly, Jean Paul was a formative influence on the young Mahler. Alma later commented about the highly literary letters of the nineteen-year-old Mahler (to Joseph Steiner in 1879): "The tone, which undoubtedly has echoes of beloved voices, above all that of Jean Paul, is characteristic of Mahler's early years."<sup>71</sup> In the summer of 1883, Mahler visited Wunsiedel, the home of Jean Paul, as Schumann had before him.<sup>72</sup> Mahler's frequent contradictoriness appears to have been a distinctive trait also of Jean Paul. Hermand suggests that such qualities abound in Mahler's First Symphony: "Everywhere new ideas spring up, new sonorities are tried out, similar to the multiple play of metaphor and ingenious digressions of Jean Paul"; or, again: "As Jean Paul dismantles his own 'I' in forms such as Albano, Schoppe and Roquirol, so here the strangest is juxtaposed with the noblest, the seraphic with the sarcastic, inner feeling with the theatrical. What is marked is the abundance of voices, not the closed nature of the symphonic."<sup>73</sup> Mahler's title of "Blumine" for the discarded movement, recycled from the earlier incidental music for *Der Trompeter der Säkkingen*, might be linked, Hermand suggests, to Jean Paul's "Herbst-Blumine," and Mahler's use of the title "Commedia humana" to Jean Paul's idea of "komischen Passion."<sup>74</sup> Bruno Walter related the funeral march of the third movement to the suicidal voice of Roquirol in the thirty-second "Jobelperiode" of Jean Paul's *Der Titan*; he also claimed that Mahler had spoken often of the character of Roquirol and of the humor of Schoppe in the novel.<sup>75</sup> Federico Celestini cites a passage from the novel in which Schoppe reflects on a passing funeral procession; the narrator comments of Schoppe's character at this point that he "generally began with comic humor, and ended with tragic."<sup>76</sup> Hermand points to a suggestive parallel with one of Mahler's favorite novels by Jean Paul, *Siebenkäs*, which includes a highly ironic account of a character in a trance being carried off for burial.<sup>77</sup> The symphonic subtitle used briefly by Mahler, "Flower, fruit and thorn pieces," is the first part of the full title of *Siebenkäs*.

In a letter to Oskar Eichberg (March 30, 1895), Mahler compared himself to a character from Jean Paul: "I am now 34 years old and, à la Quintus Fixlein, have written a small library, the 'readers' of which are still confined to my closest friends."<sup>78</sup> While Mahler's main point was an ironic reference to the character of an isolated eccentric whose autobiographical works remain unnoticed by the broader public, the reference is resonant in other ways. The novel to which Mahler refers states on its cover page that "The Life of Quintus Fixlein" is "drawn from fifteen filing cabinets." The humorous ploy of excusing the narrative disruptions that are about to follow recalls that of E. T. A. Hoffmann in *Kater Murr*, where the tomcat Murr has written his biography on the reverse side of the printer's proofs

of the Life of Kapellmeister Kreisler. Both Jean Paul and Hoffmann use a quasi-editorial excuse to point to the ironic double voicing that characterizes the novels that follow.

Jean Paul's concept of *Humor*, including the role of authorial intrusions to expose the artificiality of fiction, has already been explored in chapter 3. The same strategies, unsurprisingly, shape his own literary works. One striking effect, associated with his deployment of the idea of *Witz*, is that the narrative jumps without transition from one world to another, in which "die zweite Welt" is marked by a radical shift in language. Erika Reiman comments that "typical of these passages are never-ending sentences, an incomparable wealth of adjectives, a quasi-religious vocabulary, and frequent subject-object confusion."<sup>79</sup> She continues: "This sort of passage is almost always an extended digression from the main storyline of a novel, though it is arguably far more important than that storyline."<sup>80</sup> Mahler's music is full of such extended digressions, a trait he shares with Schumann, whose connection to Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann is well known. Digression, marked by the interpolation of other types of writing, such as letters, poems, stories, and recounted dreams, becomes part of the literary style. Mahler's music is far closer to such strategies than to the linear single-mindedness often associated with symphonic forms. The change of voice and genre, a hallmark of his style, often draws close to the effects that these romantic authors sought by similar devices. Jean Paul's sudden turn to an elevated voice, for example, marking the breaking out of a vision of heaven, might well be thought to lie behind moments in Mahler's music, such as the interpolated B major episode in the first movement of the Seventh Symphony [Fig. 39.5], whose unrestrained, utopian lyric seems unprepared by the earlier music.

While Mahler's music might be linked to several poets of the German Romantic movement—Goethe, Rückert, Hölderlin, Lenau, Heine—it is perhaps in Eichendorff that one finds the most direct literary parallel to some of Mahler's music. This is overwhelmingly because of the central role of landscape in both Eichendorff's poetry and Mahler's music and because both evoke landscape through the ear rather than the eye. Richard Alewyn has emphasized that, in the case of Eichendorff, this is a consequence of the romantic fascination with the nocturnal landscape, where the daylight world of the (rational) visual faculty gives way to a mysterious world amenable primarily to the aural. The source of what is heard is often hidden from sight and thus emancipated from an obvious corporeality. Alewyn underlines that verb forms, used to characterize sounds in Eichendorff's nocturnal landscape, generally have a prepositional prefix implying direction—most often "her" (*herauf*, *herüber*, *herein*) or, less often, "hin" (*hinein*, *hinaus*, *hinunter*).<sup>81</sup> This creates a sense of sound not as something fixed, but as moving across a physical space, as approaching or receding, an effect that almost defines Mahler's use of sonic signals to define landscapes, hence the variety of performance directions to define sounds as being placed at some distance from the main orchestra and either approaching or receding from the position of the listener.

For Mahler, Eichendorff's poetry was inevitably mediated through the *Lieder* of Robert Schumann, notably his *Liederkreis*, Op. 39. The poems Schumann selected exhibit many of the poet's key topics, and Schumann's musical treatment of them is significant for Mahler's reception of both the poetry and the songs. Key themes drawn out by Schumann include the alienation of "In der Fremde," with its dissonant gap between the protagonist's lonely solitude, and the plenitude of "die schöne Waldeinsamkeit," with its rippling brooks, forest murmurs, and nightingales. The construction of nocturnal landscapes is exemplified in the luminous, dreamlike space of "Mondnacht," where Schumann's music achieves a rare quality of weightlessness and stillness in which the landscape and human subject are fused. What Mahler inherits, through Schumann's settings of Eichendorff, is the idea of a mysterious voice of nature, a communication by which nature becomes articulate. The nightingales in "In der Fremde" call "as if they wanted to tell of beautiful times long past," a sense palpably expanded in the *Nachtmusik* movements of Mahler's Seventh Symphony.<sup>82</sup>

It is perhaps this sense that lay behind Alma's comment that the two *Nachtmusik* movements were related to Eichendorff, though she may have been picking up on the perspicacious review by Julius Korngold in which he talked of the "delicate Eichendorff atmosphere" of the fourth movement of the Seventh.<sup>83</sup> Max Kalbeck had earlier heard Eichendorff's "Sehnsucht" in the Third Symphony rather than Nietzsche.<sup>84</sup> What these comments underline is that reception of such passages in Mahler's music was shaped by a sense of something self-consciously "past," presented as a romance, a serenade, or a fairy tale, but audibly framed as a romantic throwback in each case. In the context of Mahler's work these movements quite literally look back to the world of the *Wunderhorn* songs, so the Seventh presents a re-creation of an earlier model thrice removed: the *Wunderhorn* itself was a re-creation of a mythic folk past; Mahler's revisiting of this early romantic interest was anachronistic in the 1880s and 1890s but once more so in his turn back to this style in the more modernist Seventh Symphony that otherwise is stylistically distanced from his earlier *Wunderhorn* period.

## Idyll, Dream, and Fairy Tale

The capacity to shift from one poetic world to another, marked by a radical change of voice, brings together the poetry of Eichendorff, the fantastical fiction of Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann, and the very different realistic novels of Fyodor Dostoyevsky. It unites all of these writers with the music of Mahler, whose cultivation of musical dreamscapes, idylls, and fairy tales is the flipside of his more often remarked upon irony. In a letter to Siegfried Lipiner (August 19, 1900), Mahler referred to Schiller's treatise "Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung," in which

the idea of the idyll is presented as one of three modes of confrontation between the ideal and the real or between nature and society. In the idyll, nature is not presented as lost (as it is in the elegy) but rather as “real.” This sense of the term is also found, ten years later, in Jean Paul’s *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804). Insisting that “no description of it [the idyll] is more empty than the one which defines it as presenting the vanished golden age of humanity,” Jean Paul goes on to describe it as “the epic presentation of *perfect happiness within limits*.”<sup>85</sup>

Those limits are generally realized physically as those of a certain type of landscape, though Jean Paul clearly resists the equivalence usually assumed between idyll and the classical pastoral. In his own novels the idyllic is generally rendered as a heavenly landscape, often also a dream landscape, deployed as a mediating term between nature and the lamenting, alienated subject, exactly as it is in Mahler—in the Andantes of the Fourth and Sixth symphonies most clearly. The idyllic landscape in Jean Paul, as in Mahler, is defined by a certain weightlessness and temporal suspension, the opposite of the “schwer Kondukt” of Mahler’s evocation of an earthly hell. J. W. Smeed’s description of Jean Paul’s structural oppositions might serve just as well as an analysis of Mahler’s: “In the first parts [i.e., Hell], everything which is finite, heavy, tediously repetitive is stressed; everything suggests the limitations of existence in space and time and the domination of spirit by matter. Where the heavenly landscapes continually offer limitless expanses, here everything turns in on itself.”<sup>86</sup>

The heavy and repetitive quality of Mahler’s funeral marches define one pole of such a duality, while the weightlessness of his structural suspensions embody the other. So, too, Mahler’s dualities are often formed like those in Jean Paul, where sections identified with hell often work by a “grotesque or sinister reversal of images, traditionally associated with God or heaven.”<sup>87</sup> Such a negative inversion of materials is located in fundamental oppositions (such as the hallmark major/minor opposition) but also in the tendency for ironic deformations of lyrical or affirmative themes—consider the twisted anticipations of the Adagio theme toward the end of the Rondo Burlesque in the Ninth Symphony or the misshapen returns of the Adagietto in the Finale of the Fifth.

The idyllic in Jean Paul is generally conceived in terms of a heavenly landscape: “Sometimes this is a vast meadow or a sea of blossom, more often than not an ocean or stream... [or] an illimitable expanse of sky, containing whole chains or perspectives of suns or planets. Everything is light and fluid; matter is constantly dissolving, transforming itself into lighter, freer substances or otherwise participating in the movement towards pure spirit.”<sup>88</sup> The soul’s mystical union is often symbolized by music; instruments that were particularly significant for Jean Paul were the *viola d’amore*, the Aeolian harp, and the harmonica (glass harmonium).<sup>89</sup> This is not insignificant in relationship to the prominent role played by the alto voice, harp, and harmonium, both individually and in this specific combination, at key points in Mahler’s music related to the idea of a spiritual union or moment of

assumption—as in the Finale of the Second Symphony, the threshold constructed at the end of the Andante of the Fourth Symphony, or the closing passages of Part 2 of the Eighth Symphony.

Richard Alewyn underlines that Eichendorff's landscapes "consist almost entirely of a changing combination of a narrow choice of elements, in short, that they represent nothing but modifications of a single *Urlandschaft*, which constitute the background of his stories and whose constant presence is like a gentle music."<sup>90</sup> Federico Celestini has suggested that these recurrent topics of Eichendorff's landscape are also those of Mahler's music. "Mahler gives musical form in these respective idyllic episodes to the literary topic *locus amoenus* in the character of Eichendorff, whose inventory of symbolic sounds includes: horn calls, simple folk melodies, stillness under the Linden tree, the sounding of a post horn across the distance, wandering in the night, lute and harp songs."<sup>91</sup> The literary topic to which he refers derives from Aristotle's discussion (in the *Poetics*) of a safe pastoral space, beyond the limits of the city, in which normal civil codes may be transgressed in a magical setting; the location and events of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* illustrate the idea perfectly. The latter's inversion of normal social orders and its suspension of normal time relate directly to the scherzo of Mahler's Third Symphony as well as to the *Nachtmusik* movements of the Seventh. Celestini comments that "spatial and temporal distance melt into each other in the musical evocation of a *locus amoenus*."<sup>92</sup>

It is less the specific imagery of Jean Paul's representation of the idyllic, however, than its structural function in his novels that binds his literary practice to Mahler's musical one. Jean Paul's opposition of heaven and hell, the suspension of temporal progression, and the role of such moments within the larger narrative all find intriguing counterparts in Mahler's symphonic music. Erika Reiman underlines the importance to Jean Paul of the *Trivialroman*, a concern with the banality of life and worn generic forms, which anticipates Mahler's cultivation of their musical equivalents. But she contrasts that with the function of the idyll in a manner that would apply equally to Mahler's structural oppositions: "At the other extreme from satire in Jean Paul's litany of subgenres is the idyll, which may appear both as a *Beiwerk*—an almost self-sufficient narrative with subtle linkages to the main novel—and as a digressive episode within a novel. For Jean Paul, an idyll is not so much a pastoral interlude as a recurring, self-parodic, idiosyncratic mini-narrative."<sup>93</sup>

Mahler's idylls are similarly digressive episodes, such as the pastoral episodes that appear in the first and last movements of the Sixth Symphony, or "almost self-sufficient narratives," such as the Andante of that symphony or the Andante of the Fourth Symphony. The two *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh Symphony most certainly stand in this relationship to the main narrative. The serenade elements in both movements are indeed "recurring, self-parodic [and] idiosyncratic." Perhaps for this reason, Henry-Louis de La Grange refers to the fourth movement of the Seventh as an "idylle brisée." In the case of the second movement, Peter Revers suggests that



Mahler “seems to refer to a certain state of idyllic poetry in which the ideal becomes more and more a dreamlike state of being, gradually withdrawing from the immediate reality of life.” In the case of the second movement of the Seventh, “elegy and satire intrude into the idyll and spoil it.”<sup>94</sup>

This distinctive element of self-awareness and self-critique distinguishes these movements from those that are “idyllic” in a self-sufficient manner. Paul Bekker referred to the second movement of the Second Symphony as an idyll, deliberately contrasting it with the epic style of the first movement as a “song of the unreality of the past” against the “song of present reality.”<sup>95</sup> But even here, within the context of the symphony as a whole, a deliberate discrepancy is achieved by the sudden change of genre. Bruno Walter pointed out that the “Blumine” movement of the First Symphony constitutes a “*Stilbruch*,” a stylistic break, and Mahler was so concerned about that between the first and second movements of the Second Symphony that, in a note in the score, he directed performers to observe a break of “at least five minutes” between the two.<sup>96</sup>

The slow movements of the Fourth and Sixth symphonies are far more complex in their construction of musical idylls. The third movement of the Fourth (*Ruhevoll, poco adagio*) is one of Mahler's most sustained evocations of an idyllic landscape. A hymnlike quality is imparted here by the slow, marchlike tread of the bass against the solemn *sehr gesangvoll* tone of the melody. The strings-only texture precludes the more acerbic, carnivalesque individuality of the woodwind character of the previous movement, and the frequent division of the string section creates an expansive chorale-like texture linking it to a vocal religiosity. The first wind instruments to be added are those most often associated with Mahler's lyrical, soulful voice—the oboe [Fig. 1] and a chorale of horns seven bars later. The use of a high violin pedal at this point, part of an exploration of transparent textures in the upper register, marks this opening material with the celestial character that is fully realized in the closing bars of the movement. In contrast to the heterogeneity of the previous movement, the musical voice here is fragile, pure, and possessed of unanimity. The gradual expansion of the string choir into multiply divided parts, spread across several octaves, coupled with the slow tempo, the generally pianissimo dynamic, and the containment of the G major tonality, constructs one of Mahler's most striking evocations of musical space. The gradually unfolding melodic line registers a residual sense of motion but falls back into the rocking motion of the accompaniment. The musical idyll here is, first and foremost, defined spatially and sonorously, expanding a rich envelope of sound in which all the surface motion is contained.

Mahler's foregrounding of the landscape recalls the landscape paintings of Gustav Klimt, produced during his summer sojourns in the Salzkammergut region at exactly the same time that Mahler was there working on the Third and Fourth symphonies. Mahler's music approaches the quality, found in these paintings by Klimt, of a self-contained nature in which a profusion of organic forms coexists in a state of peaceful and static containment. In this self-containment, however, of a

nature without the presence of any human figure, they project an element of emptiness or lack—even of alienation. The art critic Alois Riegl drew attention to this very quality in his 1899 essay “*Stimmung* as the content of modern art.” The idea of *Stimmung*—mood or atmosphere—was a dominant one at the fin de siècle, manifest in the peculiarly Austrian phenomenon of a *Stimmungs-Impressionismus* school of painters. Riegl’s insistence that “the beholder should not confront the motif of the painting objectively, but should himself subjectively dissolve into it” is as accurate an analysis of the effect of Klimt’s landscape paintings as it is of the *Poco adagio* of Mahler’s Fourth Symphony or the Rückert song “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen.”<sup>97</sup>

But Mahler’s foregrounded background *does* give way to a figure—the lamenting (*klagend*) oboe variant of the opening melody [Fig. 2]. Its expression of human feeling provokes a more obviously subjective response in the violins and a chromatic buildup toward a climax, followed by a process of abatement and a reprise of the opening [Fig. 4], now heard as a flowing variation in the tone of Schubert. The movement thus unfolds as a familiar Mahlerian story of unmediated opposites (treated as a set of double variations): the return of the *klagend* material [Fig. 6] is given in an accompanied counterpoint of cor anglais, horn, and oboe (cf. the opening of the *Kindertotenlieder*). It leads to a lyrical climax, more impassioned than the first, and the same subsequent abatement and return of the opening pastoral material [Fig. 9]. The absence of resolution in the chromatic, lyrical music is thus juxtaposed with the utopian, idyllic containment of the diatonic in these alternating binary oppositions. Its exacerbated returns prepare the ground for one of Mahler’s most arresting and dramatic moments of “breakthrough” [Fig. 12], which initiates the threshold that prepares the “heavenly” space of the Finale.

In the larger scheme of the Fourth Symphony as a whole, the idyll presented in the slow movement thus has a mediating function and, at the same time, a preparatory function. It mediates between the inauthenticity of the world explored in the first two movements (the cultural and historical world of the first movement’s stylized classicism and the ironic, carnivalesque negativity of the Scherzo) and the unrepresentable, heavenly world of the Finale. Its withdrawal into the beauty of nature and its resultant self-containment provokes, in Mahler as in Jean Paul, melancholy in the alienated subject, a melancholy that mounts to an increasingly passionate expression of desire to overcome the condition of alienation. In this, it prepares the moment of structural breakthrough and threshold that leads to the (entirely stylized) account of the heavenly in the last movement.

The Andante of the Sixth deploys similar materials in similar ways to the slow movement of the Fourth. A self-contained, rather gentle lyrical period once again alternates with a more urgently chromatic section that repeatedly forces moments of climax and collapse. There are some subtle but significant differences, however. The nature of the idyll here, already wistful and nostalgic in the Fourth Symphony, is more deliberately marked by little chromatic twists as bordering on the sentimental,

and therefore is self-consciously a “lost” idyll. Its rocking self-containment, encapsulated in the little rising and falling sixth figure (or condensed to rocking thirds, as in the flutes at Fig. 88) creates a background for the familiar mournful voice of the cor anglais and horn, exactly as in the Fourth Symphony. But whereas, in the earlier symphony, breakthrough is prepared and achieved, delivering up the different musical world of the Finale, the attempts of the Andante of the Sixth Symphony to do likewise are repeatedly frustrated. There is a breakthrough of sorts [Fig. 94] marked both by the E flat tonality of the movement giving way to Mahler’s “paradisal” key of E major and the celebratory clanging of cowbells at this point, equally a signifier of the paradisial in Mahler’s orchestral symbolism. The fanfare of horns would seem to link this passage directly to the massive breakthrough toward the end of the Andante of the Fourth, but instead the music collapses in a curiously chromatic dissolution [Fig. 95.3ff.] before a reprise of the opening in E flat major.

At various points in the movement the transparent orchestral sonorities and suspended sense of tonal movement appear to anticipate the kind of transition to the paradisial accomplished at the end of the Fourth’s slow movement [Figs. 97 and 98], but in the end this is left unrealized. The passionate breakthrough to E major is short-lived, and the movement ends up slipping back to its “real” center of gravity in E flat. It is telling that the Finale of the Sixth begins with a big eruptive gesture which, in several respects, recalls that with which the end of the Andante of the Fourth calls forth the heavenly voice of the Finale. What is striking, in the case of the Sixth, is the instant collapse of that gesture and its inexorable descent to nothingness. The sense of an idyllic voice, already problematic because of its deliberate overripeness, is thus intensified by its failure to act as a transition to some fulfillment in the Finale. Indeed, the Sixth Symphony remains overwhelmingly powerful precisely for this silencing of its lyrical voice.

Where the idyll is a special kind of musical space in Mahler’s music, the dream is a special kind of telling. Both present material distanced from the principal symphonic narrative but which, at moments of maximum intensity, appear to realize a presence that is initially construed as unreal. While the dream is not an obvious genre of music or literature, its recounting constitutes a way of telling. Dream sequences in films make clear, for a modern audience, what was vividly explored in literature and music of the pre-film age, that dreams can be demarcated by clear generic markers and are defined by their deformations of more conventional narrative modes. As an aesthetic category, the dream vision was central to the philosophy of Schopenhauer and thus of Wagner and Nietzsche. Wagner has much to say of “the dream organ” in his *Beethoven* essay of 1870, describing the act of musical creation as being like the lighter allegorical dream that mediates between deepest dream and waking.<sup>98</sup> Its importance to his idea of creativity is dramatized at the heart of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, where the ability of Walther von Stolzing, the young knight, to find his “Prize Song” is realized only after the cobbler Hans Sachs—acting as aesthetic midwife—encourages him to “tell his dream.” It is

the starting point of *The Birth of Tragedy*, where Nietzsche uses the opposition of “dream” and “intoxication” to distinguish the Apollonian, plastic art of sculpture and the Dionysian, imageless art of music.<sup>99</sup> For musicians, this is rather unhelpful since music, as Nietzsche should have known, is no less without grammar, logic, and formal order than is language.

Mahler often linked the first movement of his Third Symphony to the figures of Pan and Dionysus and to the idea of a dream vision.<sup>100</sup> Hermann Danuser draws on this idea in his analysis of the movement as novelistic, suggesting that the idea of dream constitutes a distinct musical “space” by means of its disruption of normal temporal and spatial continuities. Whereas Part 1 of this movement is “quasi-realistic,” he says, Part 2 is “quasi-surrealistic.” It appears, he suggests, “as a fictional dream of the fictional reality of Part I.”<sup>101</sup> Martin Geck similarly locates the idea of “Sinfonische Traumzeit” in Mahler’s treatment of temporal form rather than in any particular content. The juxtaposition of unmediated opposites and the atemporal logic characteristic of the sequence of dream images are often to be found in Mahler’s deformations of linear progression.<sup>102</sup>

The opening of the *Wunderhorn* song “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen” is marked with the direction “Geheimnisvoll zart, verträumt.” The song tells of a lovers’ union achieved only in the realm of dream, since “he” is already dead and buried. The music thus realizes something that is, strictly speaking, unreal. Its dream dimension is underlined by a third voice (in G flat major) quite distinct to “his” bare D minor military voice or “her” D major hope for his return. The same quality of unreality is achieved in the “Volkswiese” passage in the third movement of the First Symphony, derived directly from the ending of the final song from the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. In the latter, its lullaby character elides the idea of sleep and death, in the manner of Schubert; in its symphonic context, where Paul Bekker suggested it functions as a “symbol of a liberation from pain through dreaming,”<sup>103</sup> it exemplifies the importance of context to its definition as a dream episode. In contrast to both the funereal treatment of “Bruder Martin” and the parodied commentary of a street band, the unreality of this episode offers a striking shift of perspective. The third movement of the Third Symphony achieves something very similar with the “dreaming” quality of its post horn episodes. This movement, far more than the others, evokes the quality of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* to which Mahler’s original title alluded.

Where dreams are usually presented as interludes in Mahler’s music, as side-steps into some alternative reality, his predilection for fairy tales as a way of telling often shapes a whole movement or even an entire work. His identity as an artist was significantly shaped in relation to this genre, as he himself acknowledged to Max Marschall in 1896: “The first work in which I really came into my own as ‘Mahler’ was a fairy-tale for choir, soloists and orchestra: ‘Das klagende Lied.’”<sup>104</sup> His cherished early opera project, *Rübezahl*, also was a fairy tale, a fact partly responsible for its eventual abandonment. Mahler was at pains to assure Marschall, who

was concerned about the fairy-tale quality of his own opera, *Das Wichtelchen* (*The Pixie*), that the move to realism in the 1890s should be opposed by such works: "That sort of thing is just what we are now in need of again.... Mascagni led us into this briar patch, and I see no reason why someone else, you for instance, should not lead us out again."<sup>105</sup>

We have already noted Mahler's fondness for Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* and his familiarity, through a professional life in the opera house, with a host of ballet-pantomimes, tableaux, and fairy-tale pieces.<sup>106</sup> In this context, it is perhaps not insignificant for his own work that one of Mahler's favorite operas was Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. During his time at the Hofoper alone, he conducted this work some thirty-eight times; the only opera he conducted more was *Le nozze di Figaro* (forty-nine times), and these were the only operas that he conducted in every single season during his time there.<sup>107</sup> While Mozart's music might appear very distant to Mahler's own, the fairy-tale world of Mozart's opera, peopled by animals and birds, which traces a spiritual journey through a magical landscape, speaking with many voices, childlike and simple as well as supernatural and fantastical, is strikingly similar to some of Mahler's central concerns. Natalie Bauer-Lechner recalled of one production: "Mahler told me that he wanted to bring out its fairy-tale quality as far as possible. For example, he intended to treat the flute aria of Tamino like the Orpheus and Arion legends, with every conceivable animal wandering up to listen." One of Mahler's achievements at the Hofoper was to restore the original text of the opera, toned down and refined over the years, "to its original bluntness and naïveté," insisting that the public should "get used to its simplicity and naïveté again."<sup>108</sup>

With the possible exception of the defining sound of the glockenspiel to demarcate the childlike quality of Papageno, there are few direct echoes in Mahler's music. But Mozart's fairy-tale "way of telling" is often found in Mahler, and many of the elements of *Die Zauberflöte* recur in Mahler's music. The juxtaposition of character voices of high and low social status, so characteristic of *opera buffa*, given here in the pairings of Papageno/Papagena and Tamino/Pamina, recurs in Mahler's mixing of high and low musical voices. The deployment of supernatural force, priestly ritual, and the voices of children all recur in Mahler, as does the transfiguration of the space of nature into that of the temple (as mediated for Mahler through Wagner's *Parsifal*). The magical flute itself speaks like a voice of nature, which preempts both *Das klagende Lied*, itself centered around a kind of magic flute, and movements like the third of the Third Symphony. The opera's structure, of the quest toward self-knowledge, is arguably taken up in each and every Mahler symphony whose sequence of movements is far closer to the convoluted paths and episodic digressions of the fairy tale than to the single-minded trajectory of the Beethovenian symphony.

This episodic quality recurs in many of the inner movements of Mahler's symphonies. The second movement of the Second, for example, is constructed by a

clear alternation of two voices, a slow Ländler and a much lighter, faster fairy-tale music. Raymond Monelle has argued that even the Ländler reveals itself as unreal, as a dream vision of nature, or as reminiscence of an earlier time, rather than as a piece of realistic folk evocation. It is both too complex (in terms of the division of its part-writing) and at the same time too simple (in terms of its rhythmic unison). Its unrelentingly carefree tone evokes Schubert but from a self-conscious distance. The contrasting fairy-tale material suggests Weber or the Mendelssohn of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It opposes the melodic first section through its exclusive focus on texture, underlining the absence of any clear subjective voice. Whereas the first section distances the idea of a lyrical voice as memory, the second section dissolves the idea in a balletic evocation of some fairy-tale scene. The closing bars of this movement, with their harp arpeggiation and final pizzicato chords acting like a theatrical frame, underline this air of unreality: this, such gestures seems to say, is make-believe, and nothing more.

Adorno's famous comment about the Fourth Symphony, that it opens with a gesture equivalent to the "once upon a time" of a fairy tale, might apply to several passages in Mahler's music. The sleigh bells that open the Fourth evoke the same childlike world as the triangle and glockenspiel. The celesta combines acoustically a symbolism central to Mahler's world—the world of children and fairy-tale make-believe and the construction of a heavenly luminosity. Its prominent and distinctive sonority toward the end of *Das Lied von der Erde* underlines that this work restores, even amid its dark quality, the fairy-tale element of Mahler's music. Where the early works had derived their imagery from the *Märchenspielen* of German Romanticism, this late work finds its childlike naïveté in the orientalism of Bethge's reworkings of Li Po. It is a work that Robert Hirschfeld had not heard when he wrote, in his obituary for Mahler in the *Wiener Zeitung* (May 20, 1911), that "in Mahler's songs and symphonies, naïveté was not the source but rather the desire of his art."<sup>109</sup> His highly perceptive comment recognizes Mahler's naïveté, as it was undoubtedly intended, as the mark of a definitive antirealism, a critical opposition to the dominant naturalism and materialism of the kind of modernity he opposed. This naïveté was allied, without a doubt, to the cultivation of dream-like states, the evocation of a fairy-tale unreality and the withdrawal into musical idylls. But the function of such musical voices in Mahler is never merely regressive; as self-conscious strategies, they draw critical attention to the contingent nature of the narrative that they momentarily suspend. Mahler's own self-awareness of this is neatly underlined in a late letter to Alma, of June 18, 1910, in which he discusses Plato and Socrates: "All contrast is determined by *milieu* and *Zeitgeist*. On the one side, the radiance of culture in its highest form, with pupils and commentators of greatest intellectual brilliance; on the other, the darkness of a naïve, infantile world, in which the child serves as a vessel for the marvels of worldly wisdom, an outcome of pure instinct, of a direct and intense way of looking at things and understanding them."<sup>110</sup>

## Narrative Strategies

The idea that Mahler's music *narrates* is widely accepted. Its relation to programmatic traditions of the nineteenth century is self-evident on the level of motivic development and variation, thematic returns, formal archetypes, musical materials with well-established extra-musical associations, and the disposition of these within the frameworks of conventionalized genre expectations.<sup>111</sup> What is more, as Vera Micznik notes in relation to the Ninth Symphony, Mahler's music "asks to be interpreted as a story."<sup>112</sup> But readings of Mahler's music as straightforward narrative quickly become one-dimensional if they ignore the way in which it suspends or interrupts its own progress and thereby questions its own narrative and expressive assumptions. The songs and symphonies demonstrate a diverse set of strategies whereby musical materials that might otherwise appear to be unproblematic become structurally disjunct. The central categories identified by Adorno as part of his material theory of musical meaning all relate to this idea: *collapse*, *breakthrough*, *suspension*, and *fulfillment*.

Adorno's categories arise from a consideration of the actual musical processes by which Mahler's music proceeds, and they are employed by him in place of abstract *Formenlehre* categories that remain external to Mahler's music. In considering the idea of voice in Mahler's music I have made use of several similar ideas. The calling forth of a voice is often associated with the gradual *coalescence* of musical materials, just as the drawn-out process of withdrawal associated with the idea of a farewell is given through a gradual *dissolution* of the same elements. The dramatic structural moment of breakthrough often leads to a suspension of the forward motion of the musical narrative; as such, it often functions as a kind of *threshold* to the next section of the work—itself often associated with the idea of fulfillment. Such thresholds may be constructed spatially, suggesting that they work like *plateaux* within the musical ascent from one type of music to another.

In scherzos and other movements associated with a more ironic voice, the idea of the musical *episode* appears to dominate over the idea of through-composition. It is not that the music is without forward motion, but, rather, that this is broken up by a process of *interpolation* in which one type of music is cut into another. This often leads to a sense of *double voicing* that parallels the technique in romantic fiction of interweaving two apparently separate stories. The interruption of a direct and linear sense of progress results in episodes that function like extended *parentheses* to the main narrative. Since these are frequently temporally disjunct from the rest of the music, they may assume the function of a *reminiscence* or an *anticipation* of materials from the same movement or from elsewhere in the same symphony. These relate clearly to the genre types discussed above, of dream, idyll, and fairy tale. Other "ways of telling" related more or less to recognized musical genres would include the cyclical aspect of variations (including double-variations) and the paradoxically static effect of the march as well as a host of dance types (Ländler, waltz,

polka) and vocal genres (ballad, aria, chorale). At times, the progress of Mahler's music is usefully conceived of in terms of structural *wave forms*; at other times, in terms of a deliberately directionless *meandering*.

The effect of Mahler's structural ruptures and stylistic disjunctions is that his works take on a metatextual aspect; that is, they reflect on their own conditions as a kind of "writing." They do so through self-conscious intrusions and interpolations; while the music appears to narrate, the idea of music as narration is simultaneously explored, questioned, and critiqued. Carolyn Abbate has drawn attention to this idea in Adorno who, having likened Mahler's music to a novel, "asked himself a critical question: why the music seems at times to enact, at times to *comment upon* its own enactments."<sup>113</sup> Since the idea of musical narration, with its roots in the classical discourse of musical themes and the linear process of tonality itself, implies a certain model of musical subjectivity, its critical self-questioning is also a questioning of that model of subjectivity.

Kramer, like Abbate, notes that the disruptive intrusions of the musical process are rare in instrumental music and thus "constitute a critical or disruptive process rather than a normative one." Citing Schumann as an example of a music that calls attention to its own "contingent, historical [and] rhetorical character," Kramer argues that such a strategy, of foregrounding a story about storytelling, constitutes a "strategy of deconstruction" in music just as much as in literature.<sup>114</sup> The most basic consequence of this and, as Todorov reminds us, the most basic activity of narrative as opposed to mere description is the fragmentation of time into discontinuous units.<sup>115</sup> Mahler's symphonies inherit the musical imperative of continuity and, at the same time, oppose it with frequent discontinuities. Mahler's own understanding of these ruptures and breaks, and the culture of reception ever since, has been to see these as implying a specifically musical narrative. Indeed, many commentators underline that Mahler's music can hardly be understood in terms of formal models alone and that its internal, immanent oppositions to such models inevitably calls out for a different kind of hermeneutics. Kofi Agawu suggests that in the first movement of the Tenth Symphony, form is best understood as a "sequence of gestures."<sup>116</sup> Raymond Knapp claims, in relation to the third movement of the Third Symphony, that "only narrative can adequately explain a movement whose very point is to demonstrate the incompatibility of its constituent components, conceived (in part) as characteristic personae."<sup>117</sup>

For Carolyn Abbate, the structural schisms of Mahler's music are inseparable from the idea of narrative intrusions. Indeed, narrative as such results from changes of musical voice marked by ruptures in the musical surface. "The *narrating voice* . . . is not merely an instrumental *imitation of singing*, but rather is marked by multiple disjunctions with the music surrounding it."<sup>118</sup> The narrating voice, she suggests, is marked by a "schism or change of register,"<sup>119</sup> and she cites as an example the first movement of the Second Symphony, whose E major material [Fig. 3] is marked "Gesang" in Mahler's sketches: "With the 'Gesang' there is not merely a musical



*contrast*, but a registral shift to musical discourse that signals a *singer* and a *song*.”<sup>120</sup> Raymond Monelle, in a chapter titled “Musical Narrative and the Suicide of the Symphony,” similarly suggests that “moments of narration are isolated, liminal points which reveal the artificiality of the musical discourse.”<sup>121</sup> This rupture in the musical voice, often violent, is a central category in Mahler’s music, remarked upon by almost all commentators, as evidence of both strengths and weaknesses of Mahler’s music, depending on their position. Danuser relates it to the idea of “suddenness” (*Plötzlichkeit*), in turn related to the aesthetic notion of (irrational) inspiration.<sup>122</sup> Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, following Adorno, explains one class of formal disjunction as the result of the “breakthrough” (*Einbruch*) of “The Other” (*das Andere*), which can appear only as an unprepared episode because of the impossibility of mediation between the two worlds of Mahler’s music.<sup>123</sup>

Mahler himself recognized the category of narrative as key to his own music, as is clear from the music irrespective of any programs they acquired and then lost. *Das klagende Lied* was a problematic work for a would-be symphonic composer precisely because it was *too* narrative, and its frequent mixing of voices in the telling of the story reflects a certain degree of self-conscious experiment. Of the Second Symphony, for example, he said that “while the first three movements are narrative in character, in the last movement everything is inward experience.”<sup>124</sup> In a letter to Max Marschall, also discussing the Second, Mahler wrote: “The fact that in the various individual passages I often retrospectively see a real event as if it were taking its course dramatically before my eyes can easily be gathered from the nature of the music.”<sup>125</sup> In relation to the First Symphony he wrote: “Whereas the first three movements are narrative, the last is altogether dramatic; here, all is motion and occurrence.”<sup>126</sup> Knapp concludes from this that “the finale takes place in the present, as drama; the earlier movements in the past, as narrative.”<sup>127</sup>

Mahler’s distinctions concur with Abbate’s division of narrative and enactment, a distinction between the telling of a story and its dramatic realization. Mahler was also clear that, *pace* Abbate, music might work in different tenses, as Knapp’s comment above suggests. He once commented that Adagio of the Third represents Being, whereas the preceding movements refer to various kinds of Becoming. The mixing up of past, present, and future tenses has been discussed by Peter Revers in relation to the *Kindertotenlieder*, where the first and third songs rest on “the merging of past and present,” the second on the merging of present and future, and the fourth on the coexistence of “all three temporal spheres.”<sup>128</sup> The play with temporal frames is underlined by both structural *anticipation* and *reminiscence*. Donald Mitchell captures the sense of the first as a mode of Mahler’s narrative when he talks of a “partial preview of the distant objective of a work” and a “tantalizing glimpse, almost always abruptly cancelled or otherwise erased, of a future goal.”<sup>129</sup> The breakthrough of the D major brass chorale in the second movement of the Fifth Symphony [Fig. 27] is a powerful example; the moment of triumph it anticipates does not arrive until the Finale.

The breakthrough of another D major chorale, in the Finale of the First Symphony, has a similar anticipatory function. Richard Strauss was probably the first to suggest this was a structural weakness; Mahler's reply to him underlines that it was an entirely deliberate gesture.<sup>130</sup> Paul Bekker explained it by calling the second half of the Finale, following the first "premature" appearance of the chorale theme [Fig. 34], as a "look back" (*Rückblick*).<sup>131</sup> It was Bekker who first used the term *Durchbruch* in relationship to Mahler's music, a term that James Buhler defines thus: "Breakthrough is a moment of structural reorientation, a deflection or 'turning aside' (*Ablenkung*) from the expected formal course of a piece. It differs from simple interruption in having not just local, but also large-scale formal consequences. The opposite of tragic reversal or catastrophe, breakthrough is an unforeseen event, a sudden turn towards transcendence from an expected formal trajectory of tragedy."<sup>132</sup>

In this spirit, Buhler finds in the problem of the first chorale appearance "a critique of sonata form as Mahler inherited it."<sup>133</sup> The breakthrough thus denotes, structurally, a self-consciousness of the contingency of the musical form. A definitive marker of Mahler's "way of telling," it is at the same time, the critique of that way of telling, a "bursting open of the closed immanence of form," as Bernd Sponheuer called it.<sup>134</sup> It is not insignificant that Adorno relates the idea of *Durchbruch* back to theatrical music, specifically the offstage trumpet in the dungeon scene of Beethoven's *Fidelio*. This gesture is both literally a breaking through into the narrative space of the scene and a paradigmatic anticipation of its overcoming. In the parallel moment in the purely orchestral *Leonore* Overture, No. 3, the offstage trumpet is heard in the key of B flat against the C minor of the orchestra. As Buhler points out, far from being an arbitrary disjunction, the trumpet anticipates the new orchestral theme in B flat.<sup>135</sup> An operatic "way of telling" is thus taken in to purely orchestral music, just as it is in Mahler—unprepared and unmediated, but not arbitrary because taken up in the subsequent unfolding of the piece.

Mahler's gestures of anticipation are balanced by the tendency of his music to look back, to present musical events and voices as if recalled by memory. The idea of reminiscence is a matter of both tone and structural device. As tone, this is usually achieved by means of familiar materials construed as being delivered "in the past tense" through subtle exaggerations of performance style clearly delineated in the score. We have noted already, in relation to the idea of sentimentality, Mahler's use of little portamento figures and a tendency to hold back the tempo at certain points within a phrase (*nicht eilen* and *Zeit lassen!* are favorite markings here). The second and third movements of the Third Symphony provide good examples of how a sense of nostalgic distance is achieved by means of a change of tone rather than material. In the second movement of the Third, the simplicity of the opening melody and its pizzicato accompaniment is heard in an altered tone when it returns later [Fig. 14]. The effect of sudden reminiscence is achieved partly by the sudden return of the material itself, interpolated into a movement that had appeared to have gone

somewhere else, but also by the tone in which it is given: the full orchestra, the new countermelody in the cello and then violin, the use of portamento. At Fig. 16, an air of sentimentality is achieved by added nuances of harmony and dynamics (note the use of the *messa di voce* device in the violin lines).<sup>136</sup>

The post horn episode, from the third movement of the Third Symphony, has often been discussed in such terms, as memory and recollection. Thomas Peattie, discussing this movement in the context of an idea of “broken pastoral,” points to the several repetitions of the post horn’s melodic phrases “as if an attempt were being made to reconstruct a lost melody.”<sup>137</sup> Its rather improvisatory tone, recollecting fragments of a past until they cohere once again, is shared by many of Mahler’s *Rückblicken*. One of the most striking, though strangely neglected, is the *altväterisch* (old-fashioned) section that interrupts the Scherzo of the Sixth Symphony [Fig. 56]. After the grim, dissonant modernity of the opening of this movement, itself a reworking of the first movement material through metrical displacement and highly active, acerbic part writing, the *altväterisch* section is perplexing. Although it takes on the idea of metrical displacement, this is now heard in a rustic, deliberately clumsy manner (Ex. 6.1). The musical voice is self-consciously presented as distant, framed by little chromatic beginnings and endings and by filmic “dissolves” [e.g., Fig. 59] that suggest the composer as a modernist showman manipulating the eccentric old character onstage. The chromatic twisting, for example, from F major to D flat major and so to D minor [Fig. 58], allied to a commentary from the full orchestra, before returning to the rustic woodwind of the *altväterisch* section at Fig. 59, is part of a pattern in which the older voice is repeatedly recalled into the space of the present. Alma referred to this passage as deliberately recalling the games of their daughters on the beach, hearing in the metrical irregularity the asymmetry of their movements, a quite specific memory that the music both exceeds but also records.<sup>138</sup>

In *Das Lied von der Erde* the idea of reminiscence is achieved by a parallel, if rather different, stylization. The poetic text of “Von der Jugend” constructs memory as a reflection—of the bridge and the fragile pavilion in the still water of the pool. The artificiality of the music’s stylized voice and neat refrains creates a sense of unreality that is explicitly linked to something lost in the past. Its self-contained nature, wrapped up in its own reflection, becomes itself a marker of distance. In the next song, “Von der Schönheit,” the calm of a contemplative present is contrasted with the theatrical enactment of the scene of youths on horseback: the young girl narrates their appearance and disappearance, but the orchestra enacts what she describes. The sense of regretful distance and reminiscence is captured at the end in the girl’s gaze, full of desire but for what has already passed. There is no transition between the sudden interruption of the enacted present tense by the wistful look back [Fig. 16]; the return of the opening tempo is like a “cut” in a film, from one scene to another. The sense of distance and unreality is conveyed by a deliberately transparent and stable orchestration, tinged with the sentimental tones of a solo

**Example 6.1** Sixth Symphony, third movement, Fig. 56

56

Altväterisch (Poco meno mosso)

Grazioso (Immer gleiche Achtel.)

The score for measures 56-58 is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Flutes, 1. Oboe, 2. Oboe, Clarinets in Bb, Bassoon, and Horn in F. The second system includes parts for Fl. (Flute), Ob. (Oboe), Cl. (Clarinet), Bsn. (Bassoon), and Hn. (Horn). The music is in 4/8 time and features a variety of dynamics including *p*, *sf*, and *pp*. The tempo is marked 'Poco meno mosso' and the mood is 'Grazioso'. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The first system's measures 56-58 show a complex interplay of woodwinds with various articulations and dynamics. The second system's measures 56-58 continue this texture, with the Flute and Oboe playing prominent roles.

violin and horn. Unmediated shifts between B flat major and G major increase the sense of a rather unstable reality. Drawn-out sighing figures in the violins and wide falling intervals in the melodic line underline an element of wistful desire but without energy and in fragmentary form. What was enactment is now remembered in the form of a song, hence the spread chords in the harp and the arpeggiated bass in the cellos. The repeated high D's in the violin recall almost exactly the opening of the *altväterisch* section from the Sixth Symphony (compare Fig. 19 of "Von der Schönheit" with Fig. 56 in the Scherzo of the Sixth). In the transparent and fragmentary ending, the voice is drained of its substance; the final chord is scored for high cello harmonics doubled in the flutes. Reminiscence of the beauty of youth here recalls something of the same moments of wistful regret heard in the quieter music of the Marschallin, from Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, or even anticipates perhaps the closing pages of *Capriccio*.

As is clear from the earlier discussion of idylls, dreams, and fairy tales, Mahler's ways of telling often involves such an idea of intercutting between different voices, different tenses, and different scenic spaces. The most obvious musical consequence of this is a formal tendency toward an episodic structure. In the middle movements of many of the symphonies, the form is defined by episode; in the outer movements, episodes oppose the projection of structural linearity that the rest of the movement attempts to sustain. One of the most striking examples of the latter is the so-called pastoral interlude that occurs in the first movement of the Sixth Symphony. This interrupts the frustrated and largely unproductive thrust of the march material and sonata form at Fig. 21, where the apparent suspension of the dynamism of the allegro nevertheless becomes the site for a genuine sense of progression, albeit gently tangential to the main trajectory of the movement. What makes this episodic is the violent and unprepared manner in which the allegro material simply cuts back in at Fig. 25.

The "pastoral interlude" is a good example of how in Mahler's symphonic tales what is presented tangentially, in parenthesis as it were, often turns out to be more significant than the principal material in which the episode is contained.<sup>139</sup> Monika Tibbe identifies two such types of episode, both of which function as "a new musical space"—the Lied episode and the *Naturlaut* episode. In both cases what she refers to as the "otherness" (*Andersartigkeit*) of the episode arises not from the introduction of new themes, but of a new tone, character, or atmosphere. This binds the episode to the main narrative while at the same time distancing it, a crucial strategy in Mahler's tangential way of telling. Whereas Lied episodes are closed, rounded sections, *Naturlaut* episodes are more loosely formed, bringing diverse elements together in a collage-like principle. The bridge between the two is the Volkslied.<sup>140</sup> One of her examples is the Lied episode that occurs in the third movement of the First Symphony (*Sehr einfach und schlicht wie eine Volksweise*), the passage drawn directly from the ending of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. In the symphonic context, of course, the Lied episode is a reminiscence in a double sense: first, in

that it plays exactly that role in the song, being the consolation of memory as the protagonist falls asleep (dies) under the linden tree; second, in that the symphony recollects the song. The post horn episode in the Third Symphony achieves this effect by making a second appearance, which necessarily takes on the character of a reminiscence [Fig. 27]. It appears, Tibbe suggests, “like an image from a restored world.”<sup>141</sup> This sense of an alternative space is, however, broken without warning by the trumpet fanfare that restores the scherzo material.<sup>142</sup>

The “pastoral episode” in the first movement of the Sixth Symphony, cited above, is a good example of the *Naturlaut* episode. The defining tones of cowbells, celesta, and high strings (tremolando) are allied to a tonal suspension and rhythmic “flattening” that produces a spatialized music which elsewhere functions as a threshold (as in the third movement of the Sixth or the third movement of the Fourth). The “otherness” of the *Naturlaut*, a central category in the work of Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, is thus defined in terms of musical sonority and tonal function but, crucially, in the way that this material is framed as “other” by its episodic or parenthetical separation from the main narrative; it is made “other” as much by structural definition as its more obvious timbral definition.<sup>143</sup>

Such episodes, like the idea of breakthrough, stand in tension with the immanent logic of the symphonic form, especially the symphonic sonata form, with its expectation of a directed working out of tonal materials to a necessary and convincing resolution. How to understand the role and effect of such passages, in a work that patently still claims the larger structural goal of the symphony, has perplexed many commentators. Richard Kaplan, in an effort to deal with this problem, has advanced the idea of temporal fusion. In the third movement of the Second Symphony, for example, there is a cataclysmic interruption [Fig. 50.9] that seems wholly unprepared, though it subsequently draws in materials heard earlier in that movement. The same event recurs twice in the Finale, first at the opening and then just before the *Gross’ Appell* [Fig. 26.8], where Mahler’s program relates it to the cry of souls approaching the Last Judgment. The first eruption of this material in the third movement thus includes reminiscence (of materials heard earlier in that movement) and a foreshadowing of the Finale. Kaplan comments: “This juxtaposition, or better, superimposition, creates a focal point for the entire work: a temporal fusion in which the past and the future are merged into a transcendent present.”<sup>144</sup>

He gives another example of this in the third movement of the Fourth Symphony, where the triple *forte* outburst at Fig. 12 is marked by its opposition to the preceding triple *piano*, the brilliance of its orchestration and the shift from G to E major. But this passage also refers to material heard earlier in the movement (the timpani and trumpets at Fig. 12.4), a reference to the first movement (the trumpets at Fig. 12.6 and the horns in the following bar), and an anticipation of the Finale (the horns at Fig. 12.6).<sup>145</sup> “Thus, this climax, like that of the Scherzo of the Second Symphony, combines reminiscence and foreshadowing, fusing in a single musical gesture materials from three of the four movements. Note also that the tonal shift

from G Major to E major not only prefigures the tonal motion of the Finale, but replicates locally the overall tonal structure of the symphony as a whole.<sup>27146</sup>

It is significant that the passages Kaplan cites are also associated with a threshold function—that is to say, they are passages that define a liminal space between two separate areas of a work in which a unilinear progression is suspended. In its place, an expanded sense of musical space forms the backdrop for recollected fragments that merge freely with anticipatory figures. As a way of telling, the threshold moment delivers a period of mystery in which the outcome of the narrative is uncertain. Deliberately unstructured in terms of temporal direction, it produces a moment of apparent inarticulacy in an otherwise discursive movement. In turn this often leads to the emergence of a new, fragile *espressivo*. The emergence of such a voice from the cello fragments at the start of the development of the first movement of the First Symphony [Figs. 12–14] is a good example. The displacement of temporal linearity is a key element, often marked by the partial dissolution of meter and a resulting sense of floating (Mahler's term *schwebend* is often found at similar moments in Jean Paul's novels).

In the early works such threshold moments take on a visionary aspect—as in the *Gross' Appell* of the Second Symphony, the post horn episode in the Third Symphony, the transition from the third movement to the Finale of the Fourth Symphony. In the first movement of the Seventh, the threshold at Fig. 37 leads to a utopian breakout of lyricism in B major [Fig. 39.5] that remains unreconciled with the muted tones of the marchlike opening. Like the “pastoral episode” in the first movement of the Sixth, it presents a threshold that does not necessarily lead to resolution. Increasingly, the late works deploy a kind of repeated structural intercutting that becomes its default way of proceeding: the first movement of the Tenth Symphony is a good example, in which the lyrical Adagio material is repeatedly interrupted by the “mocking” wind trills of the *etwas frischer* sections. This potentially infinite cycling of intercutting and restoration is anticipated in the similarly grotesque opposition of materials in the Rondo Burlesque of the Ninth Symphony (see from m. 347), where anticipatory visions of the Finale material are juxtaposed with deformed versions of themselves in the manner of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. In the case of the Tenth Symphony, this cycle is broken by a kind of negative threshold—the sudden “horror scene” of the A flat minor section from m.193—which, in turn, produces a kind of closure.

This constant alternation of two voices leads to a strong sense of double voicing in Mahler's music. Quite distinct from the idea of dialogue, double voicing suggests two apparently independent narrative threads that only gradually turn out to be tangentially related—as in the case of the two stories intercut into each other in E. T. A. Hoffmann's novel *Kater Murr*. In the Scherzo of the Third Symphony Mahler achieves a sense of double voicing wholly appropriate to the *Wunderhorn* song from which it is derived, in which the humor arises from the divergence between St. Anthony's sermon and what the fish actually hear of it. In the symphonic

movement this is brought out by the “straight” version implied by the model and the “deviation” suggested by the harmonic and melodic distortions, exaggerated yet further by Mahler’s deliberately odd orchestral voicings. A more obvious intercutting between two apparently separate narrative threads can be heard in the Scherzo of the Sixth Symphony, whose Trio simply juxtaposes recurrent materials without any attempt at mediation. This is one thing in a scherzo but quite another in a finale, but the last movement of the Seventh creates a kind of narrative cubism by its sequence of different materials. Indeed, the movement could be said to thematize the impossibility of a single voice.

It is not insignificant that one of Mahler’s recurrent ways of telling is not a narrative form at all and indeed might be considered as an antinarrative form—the march. The centrality of this form to Mahler is as remarkable as it is often unremarked, despite Adorno’s complaint nearly sixty years ago that “the peculiar preponderance of march music in Mahler calls for a better explanation than the notion that he was fixated on childhood impressions.”<sup>147</sup> The importance of the march, as a way of telling, derives in large part from its processional quality. As a collective form, the march propels the subject forward in a linear trajectory but not of the subject’s own making. In this lies the ambivalence of the march in Mahler’s symphonies, as an affirmation of both the collective and the universal, as in the shared progress toward a common goal in the Finale of the Second or the latter part of the first movement of the Third, but also as a terrifying neutralization of the individual, as in the excision of any subjective voice in the unremitting brutality of “Revelge” or the first movement of the Sixth Symphony. As a processional, the march thus *appears* to be a way of telling because it implies forward motion and progress toward goals and is shaped by processes of intensification and arrival. It allows for different characters to enter the musical frame, as with the animals of the Huntsman’s Funeral in the First Symphony or the mass crowds of the Third, but without having to engage in any real dialogue or development. The processional is invariably stylized and external. It is a way of telling that implies an external viewpoint, something that “passes by” only for a spectator with a fixed viewpoint. In this it betrays an essentially theatrical origin.

The march exerts a powerfully attractive force because it binds disparate elements into an otherwise elusive unity. It fulfils the aspiration of the symphony, to bind together its heterogeneous elements, but it does so by force and in the most external kind of way. Mahler’s symphonies deploy marches to both effect and celebrate the achievement of collective unity but simultaneously to lament the loss of individual voices that is its price. The march excludes the idea of individual voice and is often used in Mahler’s music as the negative opposite of a lyrical mode. The opening of the Sixth Symphony emerges from its rhythm rather than a melody as such, is physical and gestural rather than vocal. The marking at Fig. 2 is *grell* (harsh), which sums up the tone of the march material throughout the movement. Its overwhelming force and brutality, as in “Revelge” and “Der Tamboursg’sell,” silences



and opposes the idea of the individual lyrical voice. The march that forms the first movement of the Second Symphony is brutal not just because of its uncompromising continuity, but also because of the massive rhythmic and orchestral unisons, a collective force that is hostile to the plaintive countervoice of the woodwinds.

Such oppositions point to an unresolvable ambivalence in Mahler's use of the march. In the opening movement of the Third Symphony, the march is frequently heard affirmatively. Rather than the silencing of the voice, this march seems to celebrate the heterogeneity of its diverse constituent parts. Eberhardt Klemm, for example, in discussing Mahler's use of the form, might well have had the Third Symphony in mind:

It is a music of perpetual journeying, but also one of remembering, of lingering, of inaction, of arrival. The Mahlerian March stands as an allegory of journeying, of the setting out of millions. He journeys with everyone who had hitherto lain silenced on the ground, whom past autonomous music had excluded with a bad conscience. Thus construed, Marches are symbols of expectation: calls and military signals, which likewise belong to those who have hitherto been proscribed by the higher music.<sup>148</sup>

It is no coincidence that Mahler's own metaphors for the materials of this movement move between nature (the awakening of spring) and the human (the crowd). Structurally, the piece is less a narrative and more a spatial, natural phenomenon. Indeed, Mahler's own account of it relates it to the idea of "wave form" discussed in chapter 2. "It all tumbles forward madly in the first movement, like the gales from the south [*der Süd Sturm*]. . . . It rushes upon us in a march tempo that carries all before it; nearer and nearer, louder and louder, swelling like an avalanche, until you are overwhelmed by the great roaring and rejoicing of it all."<sup>149</sup>

In the face of such a rhetoric of force, whether negatively construed as in the Sixth or affirmatively as in the Third, stands a characteristic of Mahler's music that is self-evident on the musical surface but rarely mentioned in theoretical or critical discussion. Nevertheless, it mounts a quiet but powerful critique of the collective necessity of the march and its unrelentingly linear, regular progress by drawing out a temporal experience that refuses regularity, urgency, and any sense of unilinear movement. Less obviously oppositional than those moments of dramatic suspension and threshold stasis, less eschatological and transcendent, are these moments when the music is simply content to takes its time and to wander (note the markings: *Zeit lassen, zurückhaltend, nicht eilen*). Adorno did not include "meandering" as one of his material categories of Mahlerian form, but perhaps he should have. The shaping of time in Mahler's music and the way that the musical subject is constructed in that process are located not just in the large-scale structural processes of his symphonies, but also in the smallest details of Mahler's control of tempo fluctuations and control of phrase and line—between driving time forward and

suspending time but also in the holding up of time, giving time, and meandering—as does the *altväterisch* passage in the Scherzo of the Sixth or the corresponding Trio of the Scherzo of the Fourth Symphony (Fig. 3, *etwas gemächlicher*).

Peter Davison, discussing the first of the *Nachtmusik* movements in the Seventh Symphony, suggested that it depicts “both a sense of aimless wandering and a prevailing determinism. Short-term aimlessness is checked by structural inevitabilities, because the immanence of formal conventions, like a return, is a symbol of resignation to what must be.”<sup>150</sup> But perhaps the aimless wandering is not quite so inevitably checked as Davison suggests; the protagonist at the end of *Das Lied von der Erde* finds release in wandering, unchecked by the *schwer Kondukt* of the march with which “Der Abschied” begins and against which, in the central interlude, the orchestra mounts a lyrical protest. In doing so it takes up and transforms one of the central categories of the romantic subject, the alienated wanderer, from Schubert’s miller or the protagonist of the *Winterreise* through to Mahler’s own “wayfaring lad.”

# 7

## Vienna, Modernism, and Modernity

### Critical Voices

What distances Mahler from his age, and that includes its leading literary figures, is the almost complete absence of the elements of Art Nouveau in his work.... [H]e must have sounded retrograde to the standards of what was then thought modern.

—Theodor Adorno, “Mahler”

In 1960, Theodor Adorno gave a lecture in Vienna as part of the Mahler centenary celebrations, which also included an exhibition of visual art under the title “Mahler and His Age.”<sup>1</sup> It is the kind of title that still defines lectures, books, symposia, and exhibitions devoted to Mahler’s relationship with the culture of fin de siècle Vienna, nearly fifty years later, as we approach the centenary of his death. But in 1961, Adorno added to the text of his lecture a short piece called simply “Afterthoughts,” in which he was at pains to dismiss the idea of any simple equivalence between the composer and his cultural milieu, arguing instead for the “irrelevance” of the centenary exhibition. If it had any value, he insisted, it was in making clear the *distance* between Mahler and the leading figures of Viennese modernism.

Mahler might be cited as an extreme example of Carl Dahlhaus’s characterization of romanticism after 1848—that is, a historical period in which romantic music coexisted with an age of positivism rather than an age of romanticism, as was the case before 1848. Mahler’s romanticism, in the late 1890s, was indeed “untimely”; as Morten Solvik has suggested, “in the philosophical traditions he embraced, the artistic works he admired and the intellectual ground he defended Mahler was largely a cultural conservative.”<sup>2</sup> There is plenty of evidence to support Adorno’s contention that Mahler must have sounded “retrograde” to some of his more modernist contemporaries; the young Alma Schindler was probably not alone in being shocked by the simplicity and apparent naïveté of Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* songs. Prior to his move

to Vienna in 1897 and, more especially, prior to his introduction to the Secession circle in 1901, Mahler's aesthetic choices seem curiously out of line with the modernism that had already been shaping the Viennese art world for at least a decade.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing marks this difference more acutely than the absence of an erotic dimension in Mahler's work. The preoccupation of Viennese modernism with a specifically sexual content (Klimt, Gerstl, Schiele, Kokoschka, Schnitzler, Altenberg, Wedekind, Wolf, Strauss, Zemlinsky, Schreker, Schoenberg) is entirely bypassed by Mahler. Despite a lifelong engagement with the music of Wagner, and memorable performances of *Tristan und Isolde*, Mahler's own music displays a studied avoidance of the topic that most immediately defined a modernist viewpoint. It is a fascinating and telling omission, as much about the psychology of the composer as of the "untimely" ideals that his music attempted to uphold. We would do well, perhaps, to remember this "anachronistic element, this sense of not having quite kept up with developments,"<sup>4</sup> as Adorno put it, which opposes the idea of neat parallels such as those drawn even in Mahler's lifetime: "Play this music in the architectural creations of Otto Wagner, as decorated by Klimt and Kolo Moser, and it will be seen to symbolize modern Vienna," wrote William Ritter, a convert to Mahler's music, which he saw as the embodiment of the modern age.<sup>5</sup> But unpicking the cliché of Mahler as representative of fin de siècle Vienna requires drawing out contradictions rather than obscuring them. Mahler's music was a powerful irritant within Viennese culture precisely because its anachronisms very likely bewildered as much as its modernisms, its naive and simplistic materials frustrated expectations just as much as its complexities did. If Mahler was a composer "of his time," it was only because he was, in Nietzsche's words, an artist "stretched on the contradiction between today and tomorrow," a figure in whose music historicist and modernist culture collided, in which the self-consciousness of a romantic subjectivity came close to that of the postmodern, in which the universal aspirations of the Austro-German tradition of autonomous music were urgently restated while being undercut at every turn by the proliferation of plural and heterogeneous voices.

In the previous chapter we saw how Mahler's literary preferences were almost entirely shaped around classicism and early romanticism and how he appears to have studiously avoided modern poetry. But his reactivation of German Romanticism, through the use of texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and his interest in writers of the early nineteenth century, and his musical debts to Schumann, Weber, and Mendelssohn, functioned *critically* by mounting an opposition to the prevailing taste for naturalism in literature and *verismo* in opera. Mahler's preference for myth and fairy tale was a continuation of the German Romantic sensibility that opposed an essentially metaphysical worldview to the increasing materialism of the age.<sup>6</sup> He was a decade or more out of step in his continued cultivation of a post-Wagnerian emphasis on myth and folk legend, but the impulse to refuse the assumptions of a dominant positivism shares a common root with the more overtly modernist movements in literature, such as Symbolism, which furnished a younger generation of

composers with song texts in the early years of the new century. Mahler's irony is different in tone from that of Schoenberg and Berg but not in substance or function; his use of simple folk materials for more sophisticated aesthetic ends makes an unlikely link to Stravinsky. Conversely, Mahler's evocation of landscape and pastoral topics might seem to link him to a much earlier romanticism—of Schubert or minor tone poets of the midcentury. And yet, the quality of alienation in Mahler's *Naturläute* anticipates directly that heard in Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, Berg's *Wozzeck*, or Webern's *Lieder*.

Even after his move to Vienna in 1897, Mahler's work exemplified aspects of the city's culture but at the same time remained distant from it. The mixing of sentimental rural topics and urban ones (especially in the use of waltzes and military marches) might seem to derive directly from Viennese culture as heard in various social spaces around the city—in its ballrooms, opera houses, and concert halls but also on its streets, in the Prater, in coffeehouses and Heuriger taverns. The tendency toward nostalgia so often noted in Viennese culture of this time might be thought to find frequent voice in Mahler's music, not least that sense of impending collapse pervading the longing for the past. As W. E. Yates described it: "The closer the Empire tottered towards its fall, the stronger the tendency to nostalgia became."<sup>7</sup> The theatricality of Viennese society, from the stage set of the Ringstrasse itself to the social masquerade exposed in the short stories of Arthur Schnitzler, is both absorbed into Mahler's music and exposed by it. More than that, Mahler's accession to the post of director of the Hofoper and his reign there exemplified the Viennese blurring of the boundaries between what Charles Maier has called the theater of politics and the politicization of theater.<sup>8</sup> If the arenas of Vienna's political and cultural life had become theatrical—public spaces for the performance of social identities—it is perhaps no surprise to find, in Mahler's symphonies, a representation of individual and collective identity that increasingly inclines to modes derived from musical theater. The crowd scenes of Mahler's symphonies (in the Finale of the Second or the first movement of the Third) are every bit as "staged" as those in operas by Berlioz or Verdi. The solitary individual, falling through the cracks between the plural voices of Mahler's scherzo movements (as in the Seventh or the Ninth), is every bit as deconstructed as Schoenberg's *Pierrot* or Berg's *Lulu*.

Oskar Kokoschka once commented that the art of the Expressionists was concerned not with the representation of its society, but, rather, its analysis.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, bordering on the idea of psychoanalysis, Mahler's music is also analytical rather than representational. Its proximity to Viennese modernism has less to do with the imagery of contemporary visual art or literature and far more to do with the self-critique of language central to his age. The most famous and most abstract form of this critique took place in the realm of linguistic philosophy, in the so-called Vienna School, culminating in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. But it is the same critical consciousness, turned inward upon the medium of expression itself, which powerfully shaped modernist visual art, literature, and music.

Mahler's professional life was too demanding for him to take part in the coffeehouse culture of figures like Peter Altenberg or Karl Kraus, and he would perhaps have had little time for either, but what he shared with both—as with Adolf Loos, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and the young Arnold Schoenberg—was an intense awareness of the inadequacy of a received expressive language and an uncompromising search for something more authentic.<sup>10</sup> For all these men, as for linguistic philosophers like Fritz Mauthner, Gottlob Frege, and Wittgenstein, this was fundamentally an ethical task. Carl E. Schorske's account of Hofmannsthal's work might apply directly to Mahler: "Hofmannsthal saw it as the trial of the noblest natures to take into themselves 'a wholly irrational mass of the non-homogeneous, which can become their enemy, their torture.' For the poet, the trial was actually the call to his proper function in the modern world: to knit together the disparate elements of the time, to build 'the world of relations [*Bezüge*]' among them."<sup>11</sup> Mahler's plural musical voices are no different, and his attempt to "knit together" their disparate elements shapes all of his symphonies. It was a task that is continued directly, though very differently, in the music of the Second Viennese School, whose preoccupation with building a "world of relations" eventually found a very particular form, in 1923, in Schoenberg's Twelve-Tone Method.

A key text in most accounts of Viennese modernism is Adolf Loos's polemic essay of 1908, "Ornament and Crime," a repudiation of the art of the Secession that was not taken up with any force until after its publication in the 1920s. Less often cited is Hermann Broch's response of 1911, "Ornament, or the Case of Loos." Broch accepted that Loos's ban on ornament was necessary but drew out a crucial loss that was largely ignored in the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of the post-World War I era. As Michael Steinberg comments, Broch "accepted the Loosian idea of the impossibility of ornament, yet added to it that the absence of ornament means muteness, expressive impotence, and cultural void."<sup>12</sup> This was Mahler's double bind: that the critique of musical language was an expressive imperative that, at the same time, undermined the very means of expression itself. In Broch's later, retrospective study of this time, in which he famously referred to Vienna of the prewar period as the "center of the European value vacuum" and "the metropolis of kitsch," he suggested that "an epoch filled with the insatiable desire for decoration sought and found its highest representation precisely in the opera."<sup>13</sup> That Mahler, the ethically driven and uncompromising opponent of an absence of values in cultural life, spent his entire working life in the opera house is thus a potent irony.

By the same token, the sharpest critic of Viennese culture was usually to be found in one of its coffeehouses. It is hard to imagine Mahler and Karl Kraus being close associates of any kind, but their work displays some fascinating parallels. Kraus's preferred method of social critique was through a close reading of ordinary and everyday misuses of language in the press, exposing hypocrisy and lies "from the inside out," as it were. As Harry Zohn comments, "Quotation is the hallmark of his

satire, and in its use he was guided by the insight that what was most unspeakable about his age could be spoken only by the age itself.<sup>14</sup> Kraus's famous "readings" were performances, in which the inauthenticity of a lazy and mendacious use of language was exposed to ridicule through exaggeration and merciless analysis.<sup>15</sup> In this, Kraus's own performance style was key, relying on tone and articulation to undermine through irony the outward sense of the words; indeed, early sound recordings of Kraus underline his use of the heightened "theatrical" delivery style of the Viennese Burgtheater. The parallel with Mahler is acute: familiar, hackneyed, clichéd, and banal linguistic materials are subjected to a powerful critique through the way in which they are performed, through tone, gesture and articulation, repetition and exaggeration.

A Kraus aphorism, dating from 1911, might have made a fitting epitaph for Mahler. "My language is the world's whore, which I make into a virgin" ("Meine Sprache ist die Allerweltshure, die ich zur Jungfrau mache"). Adorno suggests that Mahler reclaims a worn-out language, one in which the radical impurity of its misuse is transformed into its opposite. Mahler shared with Kraus what Sigurd Paul Scheichl calls Kraus's "juxtaposition of debased dialect with elevated diction."<sup>16</sup> For both, the critical engagement with debased linguistic elements was the reverse of an ideal of an edenic purity of language, in which there would be no gap between signifier and signified. In Kraus's work this recurs in his idea of the *Ursprung* (origin), an ineffable state conceived of as "a memory of a time when there was no gap between form and content."<sup>17</sup> For Kraus, as for Rilke, such a state was represented in the guise of idealized love; for Mahler, as for Webern, it was represented as the unrecoverable state of childhood.

What binds Mahler to figures like Kraus and Hofmannsthal and developments in the philosophy of language is the instinct to make language itself the focus of critical thought. To be sure, their approaches were very different. Hofmannsthal practiced an abandonment of oneself to language that suggests both the heteroglossia of Mahler's music and the direction of Schoenberg's expressionism before World War I:

The creative individual, surrounded by all too restricted forms of expression, as though by walls, casts himself into language itself and tries to find in it the drunkenness of inspiration, and through it opens up new entries into life in accordance with those senses of meaning which are freed from the control of conscious understanding. This is, and always was, the Latin approach to the unconscious: it occurs not in half-dreamy self-indulgence...but through an intense self-removal in intoxication...through a simultaneous piling up of objects, a violation of order.<sup>18</sup>

The "dissolution of the concept of individuality"<sup>19</sup> that results from such a process becomes legible in Hofmannsthal's play *Elektra* (1903), shaped in part by his

reading of the psychoanalytical work of Freud and Breuer. Turned into a libretto for Strauss's opera of the same name, it became a key text in musical expressionism.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps one of the most intriguing parallels between Mahler and his contemporaries, however, is that which he shared with Fritz Mauthner, a philosopher of language he never met and who never lived in Vienna. Born in Bohemia of Jewish parents, Mauthner had a cultural experience very similar to Mahler's. At Prague University in the early 1870s he joined the "Lese- und Redehalle der deutschen Studenten Prags" and absorbed the writings of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, anticipating Mahler's affiliations in Vienna a few years later. His magnum opus was the *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, published in three parts in 1901–1902 but written over the preceding decade. Earlier he had been a drama critic and was himself a writer, making an early name for himself with a series of literary parodies, *Nach berühmten Mustern* (After the most famous models)—in other words, "borrowed voices." Mauthner's philosophical concern was with the critique of the limits of language and its relationship to the world, essentially the same therefore as that more famously addressed by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, first published in 1921.

Mauthner insisted that language was the medium in which thought took place rather than something separable from thought. "We can only think what we can express in language, and we can express only what we have thought."<sup>21</sup> Rather than thought arising in some way prior to language, and then finding subsequent expression in language, Mauthner thus insists that thought is wholly coterminous with the language in which it is expressed. What preoccupied him was the enticing impossibility of thinking beyond such a limit: "To get to know things as they really are we should be able to transcend the limitations of our language and this is impossible. The impossibility is like that of lifting the chair on which we are sitting."<sup>22</sup>

Mahler's music acknowledges this self-consciousness in the way it treats its own musical language, just as Schoenberg was to do in his emblematic but unfinished work, *Die Jakobsleiter*. One of its sources was Strindberg's *Jakob ringt* (Jacob wrestles), a text that underlines the palpable sense of wrestling at the heart of Schoenberg's work—with God, perhaps, but also with language and its inadequacy in the face of the ineffable. This quality of wrestling is often heard in Mahler. The repeated returns in the Finale of the Ninth Symphony are perhaps Mahler's equivalent to Mauthner's metaphor of trying to lift up the chair on which one is sitting. Elsewhere, anticipating Samuel Beckett, he finds a different metaphor: "Whoever tries to articulate the ineffable is like a clown who, after he has climbed up to the top of an unsupported ladder, tries to pull up the ladder after himself."<sup>23</sup> Faced with such an impossibility, Mauthner suggests that language "commits suicide" by acknowledging its own inadequacy. "For Mauthner, philosophy cannot be a set of doctrines; it can only be the ill-fated attempt, doomed to failure, to say the unsayable. We must, then, according to his conception of philosophy, distinguish between two



tasks: (a) the critique of all spurious concepts and (b) the suspension or 'suicide of language'!"<sup>24</sup>

For Mauthner, this degree of self-awareness, expressed in the practice of *Sprachkritik*, is the highest state that language can attain. "The lowest form of knowledge is in language; the higher in laughter; the last one is in the critique of language, in the heavenly stillness and gaiety of resignation and renunciation."<sup>25</sup> The mystical endpoint of Mauthner's critique, not unlike Mahler's, is arrived at through laughter: "Pure critique is but an articulated laughter."<sup>26</sup> One might say that what was set out in Jean Paul's *Ästhetik* of 1804 and stated as the conclusion of Mauthner's philosophy of language is made audible in the music of Mahler—as much in the *Humor* and irony of his scherzos as in the late wrestling with the inadequacy of expressive materials in the Ninth Symphony. But Mahler is not a philosopher, and his work is not philosophy. While Mauthner, like Kraus and Wittgenstein, was concerned with defining the limits of language as an ethical activity (what can and cannot be said clearly), Mahler, like Schoenberg, was caught up in straining (musical) language to its limits, in exposing those limits in order to project what cannot be said, to use the breaking of the voice and the failure of language as itself an expressive act.

With Mahler, this self-critique takes place in music, not outside of it. If a productive parallel can be drawn with the contemporary philosophical movement of *Sprachkritik*, one should perhaps immediately counterbalance it with an equally productive but quite different parallel, such as is found in the painting of Gustav Klimt. Where one is shaped by the abstract rationality of language itself, the other flaunts linguistic order with the irrationality of the erotic, the mysterious, and the metaphysical. It does so primarily with the very profusion of ornament and color that Adolf Loos attacked in "Ornament and Crime." To be sure, the parallel with Klimt is a dangerous one to make because it collapses so readily into the kind of facile cultural equivalence that Adorno opposed as early as 1961. It is striking, however, that no less a Mahlerian than Max Kalbeck made the connection during Mahler's lifetime: "Mahler has been compared to Max Klinger. But with regard to the enchanting power of his veiled orchestral colors I would rather compare him to Gustav Klimt."<sup>27</sup> Mahler himself would have been surprised at the comparison, since he always insisted on the primary importance of strong, plastic themes rather than what he identified as the amorphous quality of coloristic composition. But, in spite of himself, his orchestration moves to something more analytical, breaking up the musical surface between different orchestral tones in a manner that anticipates the *Klangfarbenmelodie* of the Second Viennese School. It is perhaps significant in this regard that his most sustained connection to the Secession was through Alfred Roller, whose designs and lighting for productions at the Hofoper became a central element of Mahler's achievements there. Their first collaboration, on *Tristan und Isolde*, premiered on February 21, 1903, caused something of a sensation because of Roller's use of light and color to create an antinaturalistic visual space, more concerned with the inward drama than the outward.<sup>28</sup>

The tension between color and structure in Mahler's music, between sonority and discursive musical logic, thus makes substantive the larger historical tensions played out between the "ethical" critique of Kraus or Wittgenstein, on the one hand, and the irrational sensuality of the art of Gustav Klimt or Egon Schiele, on the other. Mahler's music both parallels aspects of contemporary painting and, at the same time, pulls away from it. The 1902 "Beethoven" exhibition of the Secession movement headed by Klimt marks the most obvious point of convergence between two contemporaries who "in their attitudes to the world and to culture...were worlds apart"—one hedonistic and erotic, the other intellectual and idealistic.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps Klimt himself recognized this when he conferred Mahler's features on the knight in golden armor, the key figure in the "Longing for Happiness" panel of his Beethoven frieze.

The frieze as a whole outlined a narrative trajectory that might just as well have been sketched as a symphonic outline by Mahler: (1) The yearning for happiness is weighed down by the sufferings of weak humanity; a hero is longed for who must fight. (2) The hostile powers: gorgons, sickness, madness, and death. (3) The longing for happiness is fulfilled by poetry (i.e., art), symbolized by a female figure with a lyre. (This panel was followed by an empty section through which Klinger's Beethoven statue could be seen.) (4) The final panel represented the ideal kingdom of true happiness and absolute love, characterized by paradisaical imagery that included a heavenly choir and a pair of lovers as symbol of blissful union. Klimt's frieze not only works toward a similar conclusion to that of Mahler's Third and Fourth Symphonies, but it does so by means of a passage through radical negativity and the longing for happiness in the midst of suffering—Mahler's basic narrative plot, one might say. It is interesting to note that just as Klimt sought a narrative shape to his pictorial art in this work, through a succession of related panels, so Mahler was simultaneously dividing up his musical narratives into self-contained tableaux, both in the interlude function of his middle movements and more generally in a tendency toward sectional, episodic structures.

The "Beethoven" exhibition was profoundly shaped by an idea of art indebted to Schopenhauer as mediated through Wagner's 1870 "Beethoven" essay. The common intellectual inheritance of Klimt and Mahler is perhaps most apparent in the latter's Third Symphony, whose Dionysian aspect represents the highpoint of Mahler's admiration for Nietzsche. Its opening movement inhabits the same amorphousness of an essentially unknowable nature that Klimt so scandalously depicted in his controversial commissions from Vienna University (*Law, Medicine, and Philosophy*), first exhibited between 1900 and 1903. But in Mahler the unformed and unknowable is presented as the beginning of an evolutionary process that ascends, stepwise, toward a higher order; radical amorphousness gives way to formal progression. While this trajectory is shared in Klimt's "Beethoven" frieze, the University commissions remain truer to the spirit of Nietzsche in suggesting that the world

remains essentially unknowable and that the amorphousness of nature was perpetual and not to be overcome.

There is no evidence of any direct influence of Mahler on Klimt or vice versa.<sup>30</sup> They almost certainly did not become well acquainted until 1902, through Alma Schindler, whose stepfather, Carl Moll, was one of the founders of the Secession.<sup>31</sup> Although they were antithetical in character and lifestyle, the points of contact between their art are perhaps all the more telling for their outward differences. What brings their work into close contact is a shared opposition to the prevailing materialism of the age. The anger provoked by Mahler's symphonies, which critics heard as some kind of attack on the hallowed form of the symphony and the society which it tacitly represented, recalls that occasioned by Klimt's University paintings, which so publicly declined to celebrate the idea of rational knowledge and social progress. The irrational, mysterious, and often mythic dimensions of both men's work runs counter to their high-profile public personas.<sup>32</sup> Nowhere is this more powerfully embodied than in a shared element of withdrawal of which Mahler's song, "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen," of August 1901, is an emblematic statement.

Perhaps for this reason, it is in Klimt's landscape paintings, rather than the urban society of his portraits, that one finds the most powerful resonances with Mahler's music. Some 54 of Klimt's works were landscapes, out of a total of 230, almost all of them painted during the months spent by the same lakes in the Salzkammergut region where Mahler spent his summers from 1893 to 1896.<sup>33</sup> What these have in common with Mahler's landscape constructions is their quality of emptiness and inwardness; nature in these paintings is not a site for human activity, but, rather, a self-contained space in which organic forms proliferate undisturbed. Klimt's idea of nature, whether of the play of light on the surface of the water ("Island in the Attersee," 1901) or the profusion of flowers ("Sunflowers Garden," 1905), project from this self-contained beauty a sense of alienation, partly though the absence of any human figures but also through specific details of their composition.

Mahler's empty landscapes generally provoke a lyrical, *klagend* response, as in the slow movement of the Fourth Symphony, the first movement of the Ninth, or in *Das Lied von der Erde*. But, like Klimt's, they also signal a kind of withdrawal. What Klimt's landscapes make visible, in beautiful but subtly disturbing ways, is the incommunicability of nature, its silence, and, for all its familiarity, its utter distance from the human. The absence of human figures and the lack of any "action" finds a parallel in those movements of Mahler in which directed motion is largely abandoned; the tendency toward a two-dimensional surface in Klimt may be compared to Mahler's increasing use of a bare, two-part contrapuntal texture without chordal "padding." In this respect, Klimt and Mahler stand in a border territory between idyllic vision and the false consolation of nature, between a critical deconstruction of society's idea of nature and an aesthetic apoliticism that was political in spite

of itself. They were by no means alone in this. In the poetry of Peter Altenberg there is an opposition between “idyllic peace” and the “restless, stupid, tumult of the world.”<sup>34</sup> Altenberg, like Mahler, Klimt, and later Webern, divided his existence physically between a city he both needed and loathed and a sense of rural *Heimat* that could be lived out only in the summer months.<sup>35</sup>

Mahler’s music touches on this aesthetic of withdrawal at several important points. It comes close perhaps to Schorske’s assessment of Klimt’s “Beethoven” frieze as an escape from the political realm and “a manifestation of narcissistic regression and utopian bliss.”<sup>36</sup> But like the summer withdrawal from the city to the surrounding countryside, the escape was bound to the modernity from which it imagined it took flight. It is significant that the modern was most often symbolized in images of transport—the steam train, the ocean liner, and, later, the airplane. Then, as now, modern transport implied the paradoxical promise of an escape from modernity, one that Mahler, Webern, and their contemporaries took up every time they left the city for their rural retreats. But transport was also emblematic of modernism in a different sense, marked in a thousand poetic titles, such as “L’invitation au voyage” or “Entrückung,” of a promise that art would be the medium of transportation from the everyday to the aesthetic. These twin meanings—of both literal, material distance and its metaphorical, figurative counterpart—merge in the work and lives of Mahler’s generation. Consider, for example, Mahler’s famous sensitivity toward noise. Marc Weiner has pointed out that many fin de siècle writers “stigmatized noise as the emblem of the masses, [and] silence often emerged as the *sine qua non* of the revered and isolated intellectual.”<sup>37</sup> Mahler was no exception to this; he often complained about his inability to concentrate at various summer residences and composing huts because of the noise of the locals, their animals, the birds (which he had shot on one occasion), or the distant sound of tourists and the town band that played for them.<sup>38</sup> The longing for silence and isolation, associated in romanticism and well into the twentieth century with a spiritual, contemplative, and essentially aristocratic existence (versus the noise of the city as that of the crowd), is inscribed into Mahler’s music, from “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen” to *Das Lied von der Erde*.<sup>39</sup>

## Modernist Voices

Such contradictions at the heart of aesthetic modernism and its relationship to social modernity are exacerbated in the case of Mahler. There are passages in his music that are reminiscent of Weber or Schubert or Mendelssohn. Critics of the first performances of his symphonies often alluded to echoes of Beethoven but sometimes also Haydn and Mozart. Yet at other points Mahler deploys the modern orchestral apparatus of Richard Strauss, anticipates the quartal harmony and

stripped-back orchestration of Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony, the expressionistic violence of Berg's *Wozzeck*, or the attenuated and spatial sonorities of Webern. In retrospect, one can hear in Mahler pre-echoes of Shostakovich, Britten, or Henze. Mahler's music is like an acoustic prism placed at the end of one century and the beginning of another, refracting musical voices from both historical directions, from Viennese classicism and early romanticism to the stylistic eclecticism and polyvocality of the twentieth century. The closer one looks, the less productive it becomes to attempt to squeeze Mahler's music into some historical label. Instead, Mahler's music interrogates the labels: it forces us to reexamine the sense of this three-part division of romantic, modern, and postmodern when one composer's music seems to bring all three together.

Mahler's borrowed voices and his roots in literary and philosophical romanticism as well as its musical counterparts make clear the extent to which his music might be seen as a reactivation of the romantic. In his own lifetime he was often identified as a modernist (while at the same time being criticized for lack of originality and banality), and historical musicology has tended ever since to see Mahler as a historical threshold—the latest of late romantics but the precursor of the modernists; committed Wagnerian, but unofficial sponsor of the young Schoenberg and his pupils. The Janus-like image persists because, in part, it is true; it becomes an unhelpful image, however, when it functions merely to construe Mahler as a link in a historical chain. This neutralizes a central aspect of Mahler's music that questions, if not undoes, any notion of simple historical progression.

In the first two decades of his career the question of musical modernism often centered on that of programmaticism. Mahler's famous ambivalence on the question of programs was, in part, an ambivalence toward a certain kind of musical modernism and the directions it might take at the turn of the century. To grasp Mahler's music fully one has, perhaps, to grasp it in this quality of ambivalence rather than attempt to reconcile its obvious tensions in either direction—toward absolute music, on the one hand, and programmaticism, on the other. Constantin Floros is both right and wrong when he states baldly that "all Mahler's symphonies are program symphonies,"<sup>40</sup> if only because it is simply misleading to say that all the symphonies, including the purely instrumental ones, have literary-philosophical programs.<sup>41</sup> Floros quotes Mahler himself: "There is no modern music, from Beethoven onwards, that does not have an inner program"<sup>42</sup> and proceeds to conclude: "One must know Mahler's intentions if one wants to grasp his symphonies."<sup>43</sup> Nor is Floros alone. Derrick Puffett insisted: "All Mahler's symphonies embody a programme—though this is a word he came to detest."<sup>44</sup>

The key to this question is Mahler's own insistence on "inner program." Discussing Mahler's programs in a 1912 memorial lecture, Schoenberg insisted that "one does not tell such things anymore," suggesting that the idea of an "inner program" persisted in spite of being unspoken, and plenty of evidence has come to light in the past century to suggest that this was clearly true, for Schoenberg as for Berg and

Webern.<sup>45</sup> Mahler anticipated Schoenberg and his pupils in retreating into silence on the question of the “inner program,” but the continuity of aesthetic between them which this marks is far more significant than the outward differences of what is generally called musical style. Floros and Puffett are undoubtedly correct in their insistence that the extramusical associations (or even origins) of Mahler’s music never disappeared; the annotations on the sketches and manuscript scores of the Ninth and Tenth symphonies make that clear. But what Mahler resisted, from his earliest unwillingness to ascribe a program to the First Symphony onward, was the reduction of the semantic richness of music to the apparently prescriptive narrative of a linguistic account. Mahler himself seems to have regarded the programs that he provided and later withdrew for his first four symphonies almost like responses to the work rather than a statement of its origin. Regarding programs as literary commentaries or parallels to musical works makes good sense, including that to Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*. It is not hard to see in this case, as with Mahler’s First Symphony, that the program was less a starting point for the music than a way of excusing the fantastical extremes to which the composer’s imagination had taken him, an excuse that the composer might have felt in need of as much as his audience.

Mahler’s position is not dissimilar to that of Schumann, whose criticism of what he saw as the crude programaticism of Liszt and his epigones anticipates Mahler’s aversion to a materialist idea of musical representation in Strauss’s tone poems. For Mahler, the *Sinfonia domestica* constituted a vulgar low point of this idea. But Schumann’s music is shaped by the idea of a music that reaches beyond itself, entwining itself in invisible ways with the real and the imaginary while nevertheless suspicious of the material or linguistic. Mahler’s instinct seems to have been similar; he invited the listener to consider that his music reached beyond itself but resisted the idea of any reductive reading of it as merely the narrative of external events. His retreat from programs and programatic titles was not an indication of a secret or withheld program (as later with Alban Berg) but sprang rather from a desire to keep audiences from misunderstanding his music in such terms.<sup>46</sup> For this reason, Mahler’s famous denunciation of programs in 1900 represents a change of tactic rather than conception. It suggests that he changed his opinion about the usefulness of providing a program, or sharing extramusical elements (whether literary or autobiographical) that were bound up with the work’s genesis, but does not represent any change in the way that Mahler composed or thought about his music. Floros suggests as much, pointing out that Mahler’s new position after 1900 is contradictory and that his tone against programs seems too aggressive and self-consciously tendentious to be taken at face value.<sup>47</sup>

But if Mahler had originally been persuaded to provide programs to overcome the incomprehension of the audience, his later retraction of those programs seems to have exacerbated the situation rather than ameliorated it. Reviewing a performance of the First Symphony in Vienna in 1900, both Eduard Hanslick (in the *Neue Freie*

*Presse*) and Theodor Helm (in *Pester Lloyd*) comment on its title, *Der Titan*, and the fact that the program attached to the 1894 Weimar performance was removed for the Vienna performance. Both concluded that the symphony was making a claim to be absolute music but was really veiled program music. Thus Theodor Helm: "In my humble opinion the music of his First Symphony is not well served by this veil of mystery. With its entirely puzzling design, the symphony literally screams for an explanatory program."<sup>48</sup> The same view was echoed by critics in New York when the First Symphony was performed there in 1909. The critic of the *New York Daily Tribune* insisted: "The symphony has no justification without a programme.... It was not dignified by being left to make its appeal unaided."<sup>49</sup> The critic of the *New York Times* said the same thing a little less aggressively: "Mr Mahler is said to have declared that no one could understand the symphony who was not familiar with one period of his own life. It obviously has a 'programme' of some kind as a basis, and without a suggestion of what it is the music is not of itself wholly intelligible. There are matters in it that, as 'absolute' music, have no evident significance, and that serve mainly to puzzle and perplex."<sup>50</sup>

The real problem, which the critics were mistaken in believing might be solved by the restoration of the program, is that Mahler's music presents itself *as if* it followed a program where in fact there is none. Federico Celestini underlines this in a comparison of the third movement of Mahler's First Symphony and Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. The latter, he suggests, depicts clear scenes that the audience, armed with the program, believes they follow. But Mahler's music (for all its scenic disposition) does not work in this way. This is not a matter of whether Mahler himself had a program that he then suppressed, but entirely a matter of how the music conducts itself. Mahler's music presents all the vehicles and signs of musical narrative and "Inszenierung" but does not add up to a literal narrative as one might find in a novel or play or film. To insist that it does so tends to lead away from the music rather than closer to it. "Music itself does not wish to narrate," as Adorno says, "but the composer wishes to make music as if it narrated something."<sup>51</sup> This should really be the last word on the matter; everything is contained in the central aesthetic category of "*as if*."

Mahler's ambivalence toward programs is also a barometer of his ambivalence toward Richard Strauss and the kind of modernity he represented. Outwardly, Mahler and Strauss had an amicable working relationship; they were not exactly friends but colleagues who supported each other's work. Strauss arranged for a number of key performances of Mahler's music, and the vituperative remarks aimed at him in Alma's diary accounts are almost certainly undeserved. But privately Mahler was keen to distance himself from Strauss's aesthetic. In a letter of February 1897, he thanked Arthur Seidl for distinguishing carefully between himself and Strauss: "You are right in saying that my music generates a programme as a final imaginative elucidation, whereas with Strauss the programme is a set task. I believe that there you have touched on the great conundrum of our age."<sup>52</sup> It was in this same letter,

however, that Mahler compared himself and Strauss to two miners tunneling into the same mountain but from different sides. In a letter to Max Marschalk, in December 1896, he wrote: "Permit me to differentiate myself thoroughly from [Strauss]—and to differentiate what you write about me from what the shallow carybants say about that—forgive the harsh term—knight of industry! All the press's utterances about him reveal his knack of currying favour with his own kind."<sup>53</sup>

That Mahler and Strauss were very different personalities and sensibilities is clear enough. "There's something cold about Strauss that has nothing to do with his talent but with his character. You can sense it, and it repels you," Mahler noted in a letter to Alma in May 1906.<sup>54</sup> Strauss put his finger on a more essential difference in a diary entry he made soon after Mahler's death in 1911, a fascinating passage that is tied up with the genesis of his *Alpensinfonie*, a work whose programmatic materialism is perhaps the opposite of what Mahler, and Webern after him, sought to achieve in their music.<sup>55</sup> For Strauss, Mahler's metaphysics were essentially old-fashioned, a point of which Mahler himself was well aware. In a letter to Alma, in August 1906, he contrasted Strauss's hypermodern *Salome* and work on Hofmannsthal's psychoanalytical libretto for *Elektra* with his own preoccupation at that time with the medieval hymn he was about to set in part 1 of the Eighth Symphony: "Since he didn't bother to ask, I didn't tell him about the old-fashioned life I've been leading this summer. I don't think he'd be impressed if I told him about the old hat I've been playing with of late.—How blissful, how blissful—to be up-to-date!"<sup>56</sup>

That said, Mahler was happy to revise his opinion of both Strauss and his work when necessary. He had a very high opinion of *Salome* after attending a performance in Berlin in 1907. In a letter to Alma he reported: "My dear Almschili, you have seriously underestimated the qualities of this score. It's absolutely brilliant, a very powerful work and without doubt one of the most significant of our time! Beneath a pile of rubble smolders a living volcano, a subterranean fire—not just a display of fireworks. It's the same with Strauss's personality, which is why it's so hard to separate the wheat from the chaff in his music. But I've acquired a profound respect for the man as a whole, and this has confirmed my opinion. I'm absolutely delighted, and I go with him all the way."<sup>57</sup> Three days later Mahler wrote again, having seen *Salome* a second time the night before: "My impression was even more favourable, and I'm convinced that this is one of the greatest masterworks of our time."<sup>58</sup> He did, nevertheless, register his dismay that musical genius should express itself in such an odd form as that of Richard Strauss.

Mahler objected to two things in the modernism of his own time—the materialism implied by realist opera and the amorphousness of the merely coloristic. He had little interest in the kind of new literature that Alma was reading when they first met, and his letters to her include several critical asides about modern writers, such as Maeterlinck and Bierbaum. His view of Symbolism more generally is summed up in his criticism of Pfitzner's opera *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* in a letter to Alma in February 1904: "My opinion of Pfitzner remains unchanged. A strong sense of



atmosphere and very interesting range of orchestral colours. But too shapeless and vague. A <perpetual> jelly and primeval slime, constantly calling for life but unable to gestate. It evolves only as far as the invertebrates; vertebrates cannot follow. . . . The audience came with the best of intentions, but in such a stifling atmosphere of smog and mysticism, the interest waned.”<sup>59</sup>

This aversion to what he saw as the amorphousness of modern music and literature is also clear in the compositional advice Mahler gave to Max Marschalk in a letter of April 12, 1896. While it was important to write orchestrally, he insisted, the music must not be caught up with tone and color (producing mere “mood music”) but rather should consist of strong themes, “clear and plastic,” well varied and logically developed in a genuine opposition.<sup>60</sup> One might assume that here Mahler would not have met with disagreement from the young Schoenberg, though the older composer must have struggled a little in works like *Pelleas und Melisande*. Whatever their differences, Mahler’s support for Schoenberg and his pupils is significant, all the more so after Schoenberg began to move in a technical direction that Mahler would hardly have recognized as related to his own work. Mahler probably first met Schoenberg through Arnold Rosé at the second performance of *Verklärte Nacht* in March 1904. In the same month he accepted the title of “Honorary President” of the *Vereinschaffender Tonkünstler*, newly founded by Zemlinsky and Schoenberg, and even conducted some of the society’s concerts. He gave Schoenberg assistance with the premiere of *Pelleas und Melisande* in January 1905. At the root of this alliance was certainly Mahler’s recognition that members of this younger generation were quite different from both the “realists” and the “colorists” and that they were pursuing a metaphysical conception of art, firmly grounded in Beethoven and Wagner, similar to his own.

My interest here is not to repeat the facts of Mahler’s relationship to Schoenberg and his pupils but to consider the significance of the profound and diverse ways in which the music of the Schoenberg school takes up elements of Mahler’s music. While this tells us much about the younger composers’ music, it is what we learn about Mahler’s music that interests me here. Heard retrospectively, as it were, certain resonances of Mahler’s music are amplified and brought into focus when filtered through the music of Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg. It is from this perspective, perhaps, that Adorno was able to refer to Mahler’s Ninth Symphony as “the first work of the new music.”<sup>61</sup> Dominique Jameux, for example, argues that Schoenberg’s Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, and the Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 16, Webern’s Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6, and the Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 10, and Berg’s *Altenberg Lieder* and *Wozzeck* all show substantive points of connection with Mahler’s Seventh Symphony. In some cases, these were written before their composers had heard Mahler’s Symphony (such as Schoenberg’s Op. 9 or Webern’s Op. 6). In other cases, he suggests a direct debt. In the fourth of Webern’s Op. 10 pieces, for example, he points to Webern’s “quotation” from the fourth movement of Mahler’s symphony and argues that Webern’s orchestration

(especially his use of the mandolin) constitutes a kind of “translation” of Mahler’s serenade.<sup>62</sup>

Given Mahler’s rejection of “colorists,” it was a cruel irony that his own critics accused him of a similar approach to orchestration. Robert Hirschfeld, for example, asserted that Mahler “devoted himself to the expansion of the external nature of sonority, to coloristic artifice, to instrumental gloss.”<sup>63</sup> Karen Painter has shown how negative critical assessment of the new emphasis on sonority and “the sensuality of timbre” interpreted it as a sign of decadence. Critics complained about “momentary effect and detail at the expense of a unified whole, on sensual surface rather than logical structure, and on intense emotion and sensation instead of spiritual transcendence.”<sup>64</sup> Mahler was certainly not a mere “colorist,” and his music never falls into the amorphousness he criticized elsewhere, but, as we have seen, his music allows a liberation of orchestral voices that was undoubtedly a key element in its attraction to the younger generation. Nor was he averse to borrowing instrumental colors that he heard in the very same works of which he disapproved. Peter Revers suggests that Mahler’s use of the celesta owes something to its use in Charpentier’s *Louise* (1900), which Mahler had conducted in 1903.<sup>65</sup> John Williamson suggests that the use of the tenor horn (originally an alto trombone) in the first movement of the Seventh Symphony may have been derived from its use in Pfitzner’s *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, of which Mahler gave the Viennese premiere on 6 April, 1905.<sup>66</sup>

Schoenberg was particularly taken with the Seventh Symphony, and the common ground between the fourth-based harmony in Mahler’s first movement and his own Chamber Symphony No. 1 has often been noted. There are some obvious echoes between Mahler’s *Das klagende Lied* (premiered in Vienna on February 17, 1901) and Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder*, completed in piano score the following month. Kurt Blaukopf suggests that the chamber style of Schoenberg’s work overlaps on several occasions with Mahler’s works, pointing to the second movement of the Seventh, the Adagietto of the Fifth, and sections of the Sixth Symphony.<sup>67</sup> Mahler’s increasingly contrapuntal style was another obvious link. Guido Adler remarked of Mahler’s counterpoint that “in this respect he was also one of the stylistic leaders of his time, a genuine and legitimate representative of the ‘modern’ in the last decade of the previous century and the first decade of our own.”<sup>68</sup>

Schoenberg’s inclusion of two *Wunderhorn* settings in his Six Orchestral Songs, Op. 8, and the introduction of a voice in a normally purely instrumental genre (the Second String Quartet, Op. 10) suggest a continuation of the Mahlerian legacy. But it is in the condensed expressionistic gestures of the Five Orchestral Pieces, Op. 16, that Schoenberg first approaches Mahler’s symphonic ideal. Dominique Jameux suggested that its slow middle movement, “Farben,” takes on the function of a Mahlerian character piece between the outer symphonic movements.<sup>69</sup> One might add that it also takes up, in more exaggerated form, the idea of the Mahlerian *Natur-laut*, a sound world alien to the mundane world of man in the same way as Klimt’s pictures of organic nature or the surface of the Attersee. In *Herzgewächse*, Op. 20,

written in 1911, Schoenberg deploys the distinctive ensemble by which Mahler had repeatedly denoted the idea of the heavenly—a harp, celesta, and harmonium here accompany the high coloratura soprano in her ascent heavenward. This work was composed back-to-back with *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21 which, with its radically ironic voice and distortion of musical identities forms a pair with *Herzgewächse* that mirrors, in heightened form, Mahler's definitive opposition of the heavenly and the grotesque. *Pierrot's* element of parody returns in Schoenberg's early twelve-tone works of the 1920s; the *Serenade*, Op. 24, for example, shows an obvious debt to a self-conscious genre piece such as the Serenade from Mahler's Seventh Symphony, not least in its instrumentation of two clarinets, mandolin, guitar, and three string instruments. It comprises a march, a minuet, a dance scene (with a Ländler section), and a "Lied (ohne Worte)," before ending with a finale in march tempo.

But the single most direct way in which Schoenberg's work might be seen to expand from Mahler's is perhaps his unfinished sacred oratorio, *Die Jakobsleiter*, composed largely in 1917 but with a further one hundred bars added in 1922. Its scoring alone underlines an obvious debt to Mahler's Eighth Symphony: eight soloists, twelve-part mixed chorus (two choirs subdivided into six parts), large orchestra, and four offstage ensembles. Like Mahler's symphony (which Schoenberg heard in 1912), the oratorio was to be divided into two parts and was concerned with the progressive ascent of the spirit toward a mystical union with God. The division of the chorus into various types of heavenly beings echoes those Mahler deployed in his setting of Part 2 of Goethe's *Faust*. Schoenberg's sources for this work were multiple (including Steiner, Dehmel, Swedenborg, Balzac, and Strindberg), but it is significant that its genesis was from a vast symphonic work in six movements, sketched in 1914–1915, to which *Die Jakobsleiter* was originally intended to be a choral finale.<sup>70</sup>

Mahlerian voices are heard often in this work—in its use of march materials, its strident chorus marking a kind of negativized version of Mahler's "Veni, creator spiritus," and in its use of a semichorus in the closing section derived from Mahler's "chorus mysticus." At certain points, Mahler's lyrical *espressivo* style is invoked, as for the passionate voice of "Ein Berufner." But it is the remarkable final section, marking the assumption of the soul, that underlines the most startling debt to Mahler. Schoenberg takes on Mahler's spatialization and distance effects and augments them into three stages of both horizontal and vertical distance from the main stage. The opening out of Mahler's "celestial" ensemble in this space, with the overlapping voices of "Die Seele" and wordless chorus, takes up the idea of a fulfilled space explored toward the end of Part 2 of the Eighth Symphony and fulfilled at the end of *Das Lied von der Erde*.<sup>71</sup> My point is not that Schoenberg simply shows the influence of Mahler's earlier works, but that his radical exploration of Mahlerian devices (it is at the end of *Die Jakobsleiter* that his music first opens out into a quasi-serial organization) brings into relief the modernity of Mahler's own use of a spatialized and luminous sonority as a symphonic endpoint.

It is exactly this aspect of Mahler's music that Webern draws out in his apparently quite opposite approach to musical form and expression. His deployment of Mahler's "celestial" ensemble was marked early, in the third of the Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 10, but variants of it recur throughout his chamber and orchestral works.<sup>72</sup> These pieces, and the Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6, show clear debts to Mahler's orchestration and to an intense, expressionist style, despite Webern's compression of Mahler's far more expansive gestures. The songs that form the majority of Webern's output between 1914 and 1926 reflect several common concerns with Mahler's work, setting texts from Hans Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte*, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, Latin religious texts, and Peter Rosegger, a Styrian author who was a favorite writer of both Webern and Mahler.<sup>73</sup> Webern's setting of these often deploy a deliberately folklike ensemble such as Mahler implies in the Serenade of the Seventh Symphony; the Op. 17 songs have an instrumental accompaniment of two clarinets and a violin, and the Op. 18 songs are for voice with guitar and clarinet. Berg produces an echo of the same world with his introduction of a Carinthian folk song into the Violin Concerto.

One of the most significant of links between Webern and Mahler, who shared very similar cultural sources and outlooks, was a cultivation of a certain kind of musical space that, for both composers, was usually associated with a spiritualized landscape. The Mahlerian "suspension" typically occurs at a stilling of the narrative thrust of earlier music and the creation of a flat "plateau" marked by sustained and transparent sonorities. More often than not, such a passage acts as a threshold to a key moment of structural change, delivering up the possibility of closure or arrival thus far absent. What is constructed as a suspension of movement within an otherwise dynamic and linear form in Mahler becomes in Webern the main focus of his entire form. This is most notable in works written between about 1908 and 1914 (i.e., Opp. 5–11), especially in those movements shaped by gradual emergence of a fragile lyric voice and its equally gradual departure. A movement like Op. 10, no. 3, for example, presents within a matter of bars the processes of calling forth a voice, the lyrical statement of the voice, and the dissolution of the voice, processes that often fill an entire movement of a Mahler symphony. What was, in Mahler, linked to a tonal function is nevertheless carried over by Webern into twelve-tone works, as is evidenced by several works shaped around central axes of transformation (the songs Opp. 23 and 25, *Das Augenlicht*, Op. 26, and the two cantatas Opp. 29 and 31).<sup>74</sup>

While the music of both Schoenberg and Webern draws out the modernity of Mahler's suspension of time in favor of an elaboration of musical space, Berg's music makes explicit the way in which Mahler's irony defines a central tone of the twentieth century, if only because Mahler's Ländler and scherzo movements necessarily sound different after the composition of *Wozzeck*. Adorno referred to the tavern scene in act 2, scene 4, of *Wozzeck* as "symphonic." Structured as a double scherzo, with two trios, it is the structural deployment of its distorted folk materials, rather than the outward markers, that binds it so closely to Mahler. It represents a

kind of extreme to which Mahler's scherzos point but from which he held back, in that any semblance of a lyrical protest is lost in the incongruous sequence of "found" musical materials. *Wozzeck's* attempted protest at the dancing of Marie and the Drum Major is cut off by yet another alienated and alienating collective form, the male hunting chorus led by his friend Andres. Only in the famous D minor episode for the orchestra alone is a voice eventually found to express some care for the fate of "die arme Leute," a voice almost entirely lacking in the opera. And what is that voice? It is, to all intents and purposes, a Mahlerian Adagio.

Derrick Puffett suggests that Berg's Three Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6 (1913–1915), are poised between the compression of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1 and the expansive model of a Mahlerian symphony. He points out that the *Präludium* draws on the opening of Mahler's Ninth Symphony, with its tentative ideas emerging from silence to a fully elaborated texture, and that there is a clear intertextual reference to Mahler's *schwerer Kondukt* motif in measures 40–41.<sup>75</sup> The second movement, *Reigen*, is described by Puffett as "a sequence of world-weary Ländler, or bits of Ländler, with an element of Mahlerian grotesquerie thrown in." The movement as a whole, he argues, is like the Scherzo of Mahler's Seventh, an idea developed in detail by Hans Redlich.<sup>76</sup> The final movement, *Marsch*, "leans heavily on a particular Mahlerian precedent, in this case the last movement of the Sixth Symphony. It is not just the hammer blows (Mahler has three, Berg five) but the whole tragic rhetoric of the piece."<sup>77</sup> Puffett's account of the movement concurs with that of Douglas Jarman who asserts that "sonata form is here destroyed from within by its own developmental tendencies," a remark that echoes Adorno's view of Mahler's Ninth Symphony as a terminal work.<sup>78</sup> The significance of the Mahlerian provenance of Berg's march material is underlined most acutely by George Perle, who says of the third movement: "It is not a march, but music *about* a march, or rather about *the* march, just as Ravel's *La Valse* is music in which the Waltz is similarly reduced to its minimum characteristic elements."<sup>79</sup> Berg's movement, by this account, does more than highlight the modernity of Mahler's own march movements; it also draws attention to the fact that Mahler's were already metatextual and deconstructive. At the same time, it stages an imploding of the musical form, which, overburdened with new material, gives way under the density of its contrapuntal lines and orchestrational force.

Of course, Mahler's modernism is amplified by the resonance of other composers, whose relationship to the Austrian tradition might seem more tenuous. Hermann Danuser compares Mahler and Stravinsky, arguing that while both employ an essentially broken musical voice, Stravinsky is satirical whereas Mahler is epic. Stravinsky, he suggests, cites formal and stylistic models but makes a clear distinction between the model and his own distanced version, whereas Mahler reworks materials to make them his own: "It is the achievement of his tone to integrate diverse materials into a musico-linguistic unity without thereby separating them completely from their origin."<sup>80</sup> Mahler's epic distance, which arises in his music

from the double character of the material and its presentation, leads at no point (not even in the *mit Parodie* section of I/3) to the gaping apart of the model and its parody. Mahler's music, Danuser insists, is not "music about music," as in Stravinsky, but, rather, "*als ob*"—"as if" it were other.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, Peter Franklin underlines a current view of Mahler which suggests that his plural voices remain unreconciled: "The stylistic and generic plurality of 'voices' in his symphonies has been prized as a function of their subversively modernist, even postmodernist character. That it struck Mahler as problematic illuminates the propensity for parody or irony, often explicitly indicated in directions in the score, which contributes to their authenticity as cultural documents, resounding the very contradictions that Mahler's own inherited aesthetic ideals required to be resolved or transcended."<sup>82</sup>

## Political Voices

The plural voices of Mahler's music, and their resistance to the abstract order and unity of symphonic form, exceed the specific programmatic interpretations suggested by the characters of the *Wunderhorn* poetry, just as they do Mahler's metaphysical schemes. They also resist being reduced to the interior voices of the composer's own psychology, let alone of becoming characters in some autobiographical narrative. Though equally elusive to a merely political reading, the tension between symphonic order and the heterogeneous musical voices by which it is both constituted and opposed is not unrelated to the condition of social modernity exacerbated in Vienna in the final years of the Habsburg empire. One way of understanding the tension between unity and heterogeneity, of disparate particularity and goal-orientated unity, is certainly suggested by Adorno's observation (and caveat), "Society recurs in great music: transfigured, criticized, and reconciled, although these aspects cannot be surgically sundered.... It is as a dynamic totality, not as a series of pictures, that great music comes to be an internal world theater."<sup>83</sup>

Mahler's voices were also political voices and heard as such by his contemporaries, as the case of the Third Symphony makes clear. The titles and annotations in Mahler's manuscript score suggest a metaphysical program indebted to Schopenhauer. The raw power of nature awakes in the vast first movement and moves through increasingly "higher" forms in the inner movements until it is spiritualized by divine love in the Finale. But this metaphysical evolution, turned inside out, produces an equally powerful materialist reading. This is signaled by the horn call that opens the first movement: by one reading, a call into the amorphous depths of nature; by another, a political summons to march. The latter reading is supported by the much-discussed similarity of the opening horn call to a student marching song by August von Binzer, dating back to 1819 and the nationalist reaction to the disbanding of the *Deutsche Burschenschaft*. The *Leseverein der deutsche Studenten*

Wiens, of which Mahler was a member while a student at Vienna University, had a similar pan-German mission. When it was dissolved by the Austrian government in 1878, the original 1819 song was sung by its members at their final meeting on December 20 as “a symbol of defiance in the face of political repression.”<sup>84</sup>

The overtly political resonance of the opening horn theme calls forth, in the course of the symphony, a profusion of voices that converge into an increasingly powerful march form, the musical corollary of different groups converging from side streets onto the main thoroughfare, as they did onto the Ringstrasse during the May Day Parades in Vienna.<sup>85</sup> By this reading, the out-of-doors tone of the eight unison horns evokes the brash quality of a street band rather than the echoing spaces of a primeval landscape, and the elemental materials of the movement as a whole reveal an overtly “plebeian” element.<sup>86</sup> Henry-Louis de La Grange underlines this ambiguity between “the tragic, as it were telluric grandeur of the introduction, and the plebeian violence of the marches”<sup>87</sup> and quotes Adorno’s comments that at such moments “the inferior music bursts in upon the superior music with Jacobin violence.”<sup>88</sup> This quality of the first movement was heard by many of Mahler’s contemporaries. Richard Strauss was perhaps more perceptive than he intended when, conducting the first movement, he imagined a vision of workers marching to the Prater on a May Day Parade.<sup>89</sup> Julius Korngold, reviewing a later performance made the same connection: “We were again taken aback by the Prater bustle of the development section, and the ruthless reaching for material adverse to art music was frightening.”<sup>90</sup> Robert Hirschfeld went to the second Viennese performance of the Third Symphony in 1909 “as a voyeur” and described the experience in theatrical terms: “The great concert hall again became a theater at one of those Dionysian festivals through which the rejoicing bacchants and maenads of the Viennese Mahler group like to rage.” His comments reflect equally on the social unrest that Mahler’s music appeared to evoke as on the quality of the music itself. The purpose of Mahler’s symphony, Hirschfeld noted, was “to release the inwardly accumulated explosive forces in a society that whiles away its time in quiet bourgeois duties and professions.”<sup>91</sup>

Contemporary critics often found this aspect of Mahler’s music bewildering and offensive. For them, it demonstrated both a lack of proper symphonic discipline and a desire to please a popular audience that exposed Mahler as a vulgar showman. Far worse, it seemed to offer a threatening vision of social fragmentation that undermined the imperial, Catholic Austrian culture through the (aesthetic) invasion of other voices. William Ritter, reviewing the Fourth Symphony in 1901, heard it as vulgar, comic, and offensive, complaining of “the way it swung from the sublime to the ridiculous, in an apparent effort to please everyone from the aristocrat down to the peasant; the way in which its Jewish and Nietzschean spirit defied our Christian spirit with its sacrilegious buffoonery.”<sup>92</sup> While most critics opposed what they heard as vulgar and plebeian elements within the hallowed space of the symphony, at least one took Mahler

to task for “betraying” the popular element within the rarified atmosphere of symphonic music. Maximilian Muntz, music critic of the German nationalist *Deutsche Zeitung*, read Mahler’s music in quite the opposite way to Adorno’s later interpretation, suggesting that in the Fifth Symphony “Mahler scorns the pain of naively feeling people in a funeral march with the most trivial melody and instrumentation pompous in its petit bourgeois manner.” In the Scherzo, he suggested, the modern scoring of quotations of *Heurigermusik* was tantamount to a rape of the Motherland.<sup>93</sup>

Such politicized readings of Mahler’s music are strengthened if not suggested by the composer’s own annotations in the manuscript score of the first movement of the Third Symphony. At Fig. 44, he marked the new march material “Der Gesindel” (the rabble), suggesting that “Der Süd Sturm” (the southern storm), when it arrives at Fig. 51, is both natural and social in its force.<sup>94</sup> Peter Franklin draws attention to the way in which Mahler highlights such elements, suggesting that “the often deliberately realistic vulgarity of the military-band style orchestration of the march highlights the implicitly subversive origins of its main theme...and lends an almost concrete political implication to the ‘anarchic’ qualities that outraged the work’s more conservative critics.”<sup>95</sup> In Franklin’s reading, the “vulgar riot” of the first movement is successively tamed in the following movements until “properly subordinated to the ‘noble Adagio,’ the ‘higher form’ that smiled down upon them all like the Emperor himself....From this perspective the symphony might be read as an unlikely lexicon of sentiments that sustained the mythology of the Austro-Hungarian empire in the fragile and increasingly fragmented last stage of its history.”<sup>96</sup> In “taming” the disruptive heterogeneity of its multiple voices, the Third Symphony thus acts as the aesthetic corollary of a coercive imperial insistence on unity and homogeneity. The question that Franklin poses, on the crucial tension between the particular materials and the larger formal process of the symphony, binds aesthetics and politics into a complex, though nonequivalent relationship: “Does the larger form therefore validate the aesthetic absolutism and progressively recreate the status quo that the symphony’s localized musical manners seem to challenge?”<sup>97</sup>

Mahler’s plural voices and their specific material sources have often been explained (or explained away) with reference to his own biography.<sup>98</sup> As the son of Jewish parents, raised in a German-speaking enclave of Bohemia, Mahler experienced from an early age the discrepancy between the net of Habsburg administration and the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural plurality over which it was thrown but to which it remained unreconciled. Herta Blaukopf describes the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary thus:

After Russia and Sweden (at that time united with Norway) it was the largest state in Europe, and also ranked third in population. These nearly forty million inhabitants were made up of twelve different nations (not counting



the smaller tribes): Hungarians, Poles, Ruthenians, Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks, Slovenians, Croatians, and Italians (to name only the most prominent), plus the predominating German Austrians, whose speech and culture was also professed by the Jews, albeit indifferently, in whatever part of the monarchy they lived.<sup>99</sup>

From this perspective it is hardly surprising, as Raymond Knapp points out, that Mahler was “a composer who ‘spoke’ different musical dialects and composed in idioms directly reflective of his diverse Bohemian, Austrian, and German musical roots.”<sup>100</sup> Accounts of Mahler’s polyglot experiences are numerous in his biographies, from those of his friend and fellow Bohemian, Guido Adler, or Fritz Löhr’s memories of a visit with Mahler to his childhood home in 1884,<sup>101</sup> to more recent accounts. Peter Franklin, for example, underlines that Mahler’s early musical experiences in Iglau would have included the musical life of Czech peasantry, Bohemian itinerant players, German choral music, amateur orchestral concerts, a small professional theater and opera house, and the military band of the local garrison heard in concerts and parades.<sup>102</sup>

But it is perhaps as reductive to account for the plural voices of Mahler’s music by reference to his childhood experience or the nature of the Habsburg empire as it is to explain it through reference to his own character.<sup>103</sup> Natalie Bauer-Lechner tells us, after all, that Mahler was himself famously changeable: “I have never seen such a whirlwind succession of mood-changes in anyone else.... [H]e can switch from the most passionate approval to the most violent disagreement without any transition whatever.” One might find significance equally in her comments on his unpredictable rhythm when walking or rowing.<sup>104</sup> Artworks are nothing if they are not both particular and more than their particulars at the same time; the Jewish, Bohemian, military, peasant, Austrian, and German voices may well filter into Mahler’s music from his own experience of the complex social differences of middle Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, but the symphonies exceed that life. The symphony, like the novel, is what Bakhtin calls a “speech genre” and derives from the interactions of specific social groups. The crisis of the symphony in Mahler’s hands is thus to be read partly linguistically (formalistically) as a problem of competing musical languages but also (contextually) as a problem of the social space in which the symphony takes place. In Mahler’s lifetime the idea of a unified sense of identity among the audience for symphonic works could no longer be taken for granted; the capacity of the symphony to create one was, at the same time, becoming increasingly weaker—a trend not significantly altered by the powerful exception of the Eighth Symphony.

If we look for those plural voices in Mahler’s Vienna rather than in his childhood they are not hard to find. The timing of Mahler’s triumphant arrival to assume his new post at the Hofoper in Vienna, his own “city of dreams,” was not insignificant. The year 1897 was marked by a number of events that signaled the decline

of the old world and the irrepressible force of the new (the death of Brahms, for example, occurred in the same year that electric trams began to run on Vienna's streets). No event was more telling of the new politics of the city, however, than the popular election of Karl Lueger as city mayor, on an anti-Semitic program. Although his appointment was at first opposed by the emperor, even the highly conservative Franz Josef subsequently bowed to the inevitable new force of popular politics. Just as Mahler arrived to take up his post at the Hofoper, then, this event underlined that politics was to be shaped by the force of a broad mass of the population rather than by the individual.

It was a very different political landscape to the one Mahler had known as a student in Vienna, from 1875 to 1880. In 1878 he joined the Pernerstorfer Circle, a group whose origins lay in the sense of separation experienced by Austrian Germans in the late 1860s after Austria joined Napoleon III in an alliance against the Prussian Germans. Like the much larger *Leseverein der deutsche Studenten Wiens*, founded in 1871, the Pernerstorfer Circle looked to Germanic culture as a tool for the restoration of a pan-German political unity. While, for Mahler, the specific political aspirations of pan-German nationalism may later have evaporated, the cultural ideals with which it was associated remained with him throughout his life. The founding in 1873, by Guido Adler and Felix Mottl, of the *Wiener Akademischen Wagner-Verein* was thus a cultural event of political significance. One of its members, Siegfried Lipiner, was later to introduce Mahler into the Pernerstorfer Circle.

For all of Mahler's early identification with political pan-Germanism, his music is no simple embodiment of its ideals. Despite his faith in a fundamentally Kantian idealism, his music is characterized by the constant undermining of the very universal categories it tries, at the same time, to assert. A superficial sociology of music might suggest that Mahler's music encodes the contradictions of the final years of the Habsburg empire in which the attempt to assert an aesthetic universality over heterogeneous materials becomes either strident or resignatory in the face of its own impossibility. While such a view is a very partial perspective on the music, it nevertheless points to a source of its immanent musical tension—the repeatedly frustrated attempts to order refractory materials into some closed unity. And what are those refractory materials? More often than not they derive from the folk and street music that recall Mahler's own accounts of Iglau, as if his Czech origins could never be completely denied despite his success in the imperial capital. As such they constitute the eruption of what Peter Franklin referred to as “the popular, the ephemeral, the ethnic [and] the worldly,” elements from which the imperial institutions of art, like the Vienna Conservatoire, might have seemed very distant. Ironically, it is in the music of the Second Viennese School, and in their serial music most particularly, that one finds the clearest aesthetic corollary for the ideals of the empire: ironic in that these ideals were achieved musically only in the decades after its final destruction in 1918. It is not hard, for example, to find in Webern's lectures

of 1932–1933 echoes of Georg von Schönerer's slogan, "Durch Reinheit zur Einheit" (Through purity to unity).<sup>105</sup>

The tension between a centralizing political authority and the demands of plural voices was nowhere more visible at the fin de siècle than in the debate over language. A longstanding attempt by the Czechs to have their own language officially recognized culminated, on April 5, 1897, with the so-called Badeni ordinances. These were two proposals presented to parliament by the prime minister, Count Badeni, aimed at reducing the mounting political tension on this question. His proposal was that, in Moravia and Bohemia, Czech should become an official language of government business alongside German; by July 1901, civil servants working in either of these provinces would have to be fluent in both. Since Czech civil servants spoke German as a matter of course, while Germans in Moravia and Bohemia never learned Czech, the effect would have been to disqualify the German middle class from the civil service there. The ensuing riots, in both parliament and on the streets, forced Badeni's resignation on November 28, 1897.

It is against this background that arguments in the musical press about the programming of Czech music take on a wider political resonance. Mahler walked directly into this in spectacular fashion, since the first opera he conducted, as the new director of the Hofoper, on the emperor's "Name day" on October 4, 1897, was Smetana's *Dalibor*. As if this were not bad enough, it was quickly pointed out that a year earlier the same occasion had been marked at the Hofoper by yet another Czech opera, Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*. Worse still, *Dalibor* is a tale of Czech resistance to foreign occupation whose political overtones in the wake of the Badeni Ordinances were glaring to both sides.<sup>106</sup> Mahler was Czech by birth but not by culture or language. He had taken a great interest in Smetana's operas during the time he was conducting in Prague but not in any way to identify himself as Czech. The comparison with Janáček is instructive in this regard. Mahler was born only six years after Janáček and they were brought up only fifty miles or so apart (Mahler in Iglau and Janáček in Brno). Their lives crossed in several ways, yet always indirectly. When Janáček arrived in Vienna in April 1880 (at age twenty-five) to study at the Conservatoire, Mahler (then nineteen) was still living in Vienna and had himself been a student at the Conservatoire only two years earlier. Janáček even had composition lessons from Mahler's former teacher, Franz Krenn, but there the connections seem to run out, and after Janáček's petulant departure only a few months later their lives began to diverge inexorably. Their closest contact came in 1904: via an intermediary, Janáček had invited Mahler, by then director of the Vienna Opera, to hear a performance of *Jenufa* in Brno. Mahler's reply (December 9, 1904) was short but courteous, and he asked for a copy of the vocal score "with German words" since, presumably, he spoke no Czech.<sup>107</sup>

The point is that Mahler was *not* a Czech composer. For even though he was born and brought up in the Czech provinces, his cultural roots were fundamentally Austro-German. Iglau, like many Moravian and Bohemian towns, was a

German-speaking enclave within a larger Czech-speaking rural society. And Mahler's parents, as Jews, were typical in identifying with the Germanic urban culture, finding there more social acceptance and economic opportunities than among the Czech-speaking community. Mahler's father apparently did business with both communities, speaking German with the townspeople and Czech with the farmers, demonstrating a bilingualism that anticipated some of the qualities of his son's later music. But German was unequivocally the language of success and social advancement: it was the language of the town, of the educated, and, as the language of the imperial bureaucracy, of the powerful. In towns like Iglau, Czech was the language of farmers and peasants: the language of the ruled rather than the rulers. Janáček, one should remember, had apparently to contend with the fact that even his wife's grandmother thought Czech was a language "fit only for servants."<sup>108</sup> Mahler's experience was echoed by many, including Fritz Mauthner, who similarly was from a Jewish family who spoke German among themselves but whose urban existence was a linguistic island in a sea of Czech speakers.<sup>109</sup> Gershon Weiler summarizes Mauthner's more complex experience thus: "His mother tongue was German and with the servants he spoke Czech. He also had to study Czech in the gymnasium as a second living language, and being Jewish, he was subjected to the rudiments of Hebrew.... Born in a linguistic border-area and growing up at the time of rising Czech nationalism, awareness of his own Jewish background necessarily made him question his own identity and belonging."<sup>110</sup>

In Mahler's professional life he was frequently caught in tensions between different linguistic cultures. As musical director at the opera in Budapest (1888–1891) he had Wagner's *Ring* cycle translated into Hungarian. According to Natalie Bauer-Lechner, this was less out of a sensitivity to the national sentiments of the country than an attempt to impose some unity—any unity—on an impossibly heteroglossic practice: "In order to get rid of the dreadful abuse of having a single opera sung, during the course of one evening, in Hungarian, Italian and often French or German as well, he had established the artistic principle that a work must be sung throughout in one language, namely Hungarian."<sup>111</sup> What Mahler, the conductor, attempted to impose on musical performance was nevertheless frequently undermined in his work as a composer. There are many points in his music that produce an effect not unlike the one he was attempting to expunge in Budapest, of several languages coexisting in the same work. The Italian composer Alfredo Casella, reviewing the Second Symphony in 1910, heard it thus: "It is impossible to imagine anything so dissimilar as the various elements of which every one of the Symphonies is made up. Constant variety, superabundant imagination: these are the prime impressions transmitted by this strange music, in which an iron hand unites and fuses the apparently most disparate melodic, rhythmic and harmonic elements. The Prater is mixed with Hungary, and both join hands with Prague."<sup>112</sup>

As the trajectory of the Third underlines, Mahler's compositional aim was certainly to unify these plural voices. To be sure, he insisted that a symphony should

"reflect the whole world," but it should also draw this plurality into a synthetic whole, thus constituting a unity, an identity, a subject. Such was the symphonic ideal of the tradition he inherited. We cannot look to biography to explain the heteroglossia of his music; certainly it provides some of the materials, but plenty of other composers from the provinces of the Habsburg empire wrote in the "official" style. Moreover, to overemphasize the specificity of Mahler's biography risks underplaying the historical forces at work in his music. Hermann Danuser cites Guido Adler's point that nineteenth-century composers already practiced a "Stilmischung," in other words, "the stringing together and connecting (outwardly or inwardly) of two or more style types within one and the same work."<sup>113</sup> In the end, what defines Mahler's musical voice is its definitive plurality, its resistance to the unity it nevertheless seeks, its fragmentary, recalcitrant, tangential, obtuse, polyphonic identity. Whatever stories one tells about Mahler's own psychology and identity, his cultural roots and his biography, the plural cultural and aesthetic politics of his working life and the society in which he lived, the historical tensions of the musical tradition which he reproduced and critiqued as both performer and composer—all of these ultimately come back to the music, without which Gustav Mahler (born in Kaliště in 1860, died in Vienna in 1911) is of no more interest to us than many forgotten figures of the past. It is the plural voices of the music that are the beginning and end of our inquiry.

Mahler's famous remark that he was "thrice homeless: as a Czech among Austrians, as an Austrian among Germans, and as a Jew throughout the world" thus needs to be treated with caution as an explication of his music. In an interview for the *New York Daily Tribune* of April 30, 1910, Mahler complained: "I am always called a Bohemian....I read it everywhere. Yet I am not. I am a German. It is true that I was born in Bohemia, but of German parents. It is also true that I admire Smetana. Yet I admire also Debussy, and that does not make me a Frenchman."<sup>114</sup> Ernst Krenek (who was for a short while married to Mahler's daughter Anna) may have been half remembering this when he underlined that Mahler resisted being characterized as Bohemian. "He protested, pointing out that he was the offspring of a German family and that his music was German music....It did not occur to him to call himself and his ancestors Jewish."<sup>115</sup>

Mahler was hardly alone as a prominent cultural figure of fin de siècle Vienna born to Jewish parents in one of the Crown Lands of Bohemia and Moravia. His fellow Bohemian Jews included Victor Adler, Otto Bauer, Richard Beer-Hofmann, Hermann Broch, Egon Friedell, Karl Kraus, Stefan Zweig, Sigmund Freud, Guido Adler, Otto Neurath, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Max Reinhardt, Arnold Schoenberg, and Otto Weininger.<sup>116</sup> Hermann Broch was born into a Jewish family of textile manufacturers of Moravian descent. Hugo von Hofmannsthal was born a Catholic into a similar background.<sup>117</sup> Robert Hirschfeld was born in Moravia three years before Mahler. The son of a rabbi, he taught music aesthetics at Vienna University. Of his other prominent critics, Richard Wallascheck was also originally

from Moravia, and Richard Horn, Eduard Hanslick, and Richard Kralik were all from Bohemia.

Mahler was typical of such figures in defining himself wholeheartedly through German culture. His membership of the Leseverein and the Pernerstorfer circle and, even more, his lifelong championing of the artistic legacy of German culture and thought underlined the strength of his identification with the pan-German ideal. Stephen Beller suggests that Schiller represented a "German Ideal" for assimilated Jews "more real than actual Germans," and it was this ideal that undoubtedly attracted Mahler, one by which "German became a synonym among Jews for all that was liberal, just and progressive."<sup>118</sup> Mahler's identification with German culture thus went hand in hand with a political ideal, a liberal and progressive ideal that contrasted with a conservative and reactionary (Austrian) culture. In this spirit, Richard Batka, in a review of the Seventh Symphony, quoted Arthur Schnitzler as suggesting that Strauss might be taken as the Jew and Mahler the true German.<sup>119</sup>

Something of this can be seen in Mahler's wholehearted use of the *Wunderhorn* poetry. Jon Finson has demonstrated that the original publication of this volume was shaped by a wider political purpose, suggesting that Arnim and Brentano "hoped to engender a sense of German cultural tradition and community which would ultimately unify the German nation."<sup>120</sup> He goes on to suggest that, in the same way, Mahler "adopted folk material for politico-cultural reasons, and as a result he employed it as the means to an end, not as an end in itself."<sup>121</sup> Peter Franklin similarly suggests that the *Wunderhorn* poetry "played a part in Mahler's efforts to create an identifiably 'German' voice."<sup>122</sup> The same point was made by anti-Semitic critics of Mahler's own time, who "saw in his fondness for the *Wunderhorn* no more than a desperate attempt, quite unsuccessful moreover, at assimilation."<sup>123</sup> It is perhaps this larger cultural identification that explains the apparent ease with which Mahler converted to Catholicism shortly before he was considered for his post at the Hofoper.<sup>124</sup> Considering Mahler's position as *Hofoperndirektor*, his conversion to Catholicism and marriage to the society beauty, Alma Schindler, Beller suggests that, "as far as the outer trappings of assimilation went, he had gone as far, perhaps further, than any person of Jewish descent could expect to get."<sup>125</sup> Mahler was thus typical of a generation of assimilated Austro-German Jews but exceptional in the level of his achievement.

For all that, Mahler's career was frequently marked by blatantly anti-Semitic criticism, not least from opponents who exploited a political climate of anti-Semitism for other ends. His appointment to the Hofoper provoked undisguised anti-Semitic opposition, especially in the pages of the *Deutsche Zeitung*. Sandra McColl quotes from the edition of April 10, 1897: "And so we ask, is it opportune openly to appoint a Jew to the German opera of a city in which a strong movement against the fearsome Jewification of art is just cutting a path? The example of [Hermann] Levi has taught us nothing at all; a Jewish conductor does not offer the

least guarantee that our German-minded Court Opera, which sails in foreign waters anyway, will even continue in the German sense, in the preservation and cultivation of our great music."<sup>126</sup> Mahler's words in a letter to Oskar Fried betray the experience of a seasoned politician in the confrontational arena of artistic institutions: "And don't forget that we can do nothing about our being Jewish, our chief mistake. We must merely try to moderate a little those superficial aspects of our nature which really *do* disturb, and to *give way as little as possible on important matters*."<sup>127</sup> The same ironic tone can be heard in a letter to his sister Justine of January 1903. Trying to avoid some ill feeling, Mahler quipped, "You can leave such touchiness to people of Jewish disposition."<sup>128</sup>

In private, it is clear that Mahler did not identify with the culture of unasimilated Jews. In 1903 he traveled to Lemberg in Poland to conduct two concerts. His letters to Alma reveal a powerfully defensive reaction on encountering Orthodox Jews there. "Life here has an aspect all of its own. The most endearing part of it are the Polish Jews that roam the streets here just like stray dogs in other places.—It's highly amusing to observe them! My God, are these supposed to be my kith and kin?! In the face of such evidence, all theories of racial origin appear more ludicrous than I can tell you!"<sup>129</sup> A few days later he touched on the same topic in another letter: "What a filthy place Lemberg is. Except for when I'm in the hotel, I take care not to lay my hands on anything. It's all so unsavoury. And one couldn't imagine anything dirtier than the Polish Jews here."<sup>130</sup> On his way to St. Petersburg, in October 1907, he stopped off for two hours in Warsaw station. His account to Alma recalls the letters of four years earlier: "I wandered around in search of our old Jew. I couldn't find him, but I did find a number of younger ones (I thought it better not to bring one back as a souvenir for you). All the same, I had the most amusing time. It's a strange experience to observe such exotic people at close hand."<sup>131</sup>

Anti-Semitic criticism focused on Mahler as both conductor and composer. His conducting style was often singled out. K. M. Knittel has shown how Mahler's physiognomy, his gesture and body language were all drawn into a denigration of his conducting whose exaggerated and excessive style was by turns daemonic (often linked to Hoffmann's Kreisler), nervous, and hypermodern. All this added up to a stereotypical characterization of Jewishness. When critics sought to ridicule Mahler's music or conducting, it was all too easy to reproduce variants of this list. Mahler's exoticism or Orientalism were ciphers for his Jewishness; his popularity and unoriginality, evidence of a presumed Jewish tendency to imitate.<sup>132</sup> Interestingly, at the end of his life, reviewers in New York often commented on the sobriety of Mahler's conducting style, its calm and unexaggerated quality: "He has absolutely none of the graces, none of the poses or ornate and unnecessary gestures of the 'prima donna' conductor." "Mr Mahler is not one of the ostentatiously 'subjective' conductors....His tempo for the most part seemed natural, inevitable, not ostentatiously modified with the changing expression, nor obstructed with rubatos. There

was no anxious seeking after 'expression,' no rhetorical phrasing or extravagant modeling in high relief."<sup>133</sup>

While Mahler's Jewishness was an issue for some of his opponents, like so much in Mahler reception, what was at first received negatively is now reinterpreted from a quite different angle. Mahler's "peripheral" ethnic and religious origins, as a Bohemian Jew, are unfailingly cited as evidence in readings of his music that seek both to reveal the plurality of his musical voices but also to define it by a logic of alterity in which the Bohemian-Jewish Other opposes the hegemony of the Imperial-Catholic center. For all the persuasiveness of this model, however, it stands or falls according to what extent we might tease out a specifically Jewish voice in the music itself. This is problematic and has always been so. The idea of a Jewish tone or character in Mahler's music was already disputed in his own lifetime, by both friends and foes. Max Brod alluded to the presence of Jewish themes and rhythms in Mahler's music as early as 1915 but as part of a mixture of styles that included Austrian (Schubert and Bruckner), Bohemian (Smetana), and classical elements. Others have categorically denied the relevance of any specifically Jewish elements in the music. Neville Cardus insisted that Mahler was a thoroughly assimilated Austrian and "composed no music in which a truly Hebraic voice is heard."<sup>134</sup>

More recently and in the face of an apparent denial of Jewish elements in Mahler's music, some commentators have reacted forcefully to what they see as a kind of "suppression" of the Jewish element in Mahler. David Schiff argues that Mahler and Schoenberg "were not the typical complacently assimilated Jewish bourgeois intellectuals" of the type described by Stefan Zweig. Far from embracing traditional Austrian musical culture, he insists, they undermined it, not least by their opposition to secularism.<sup>135</sup> Vladimír Karbusický insists that Mahler's Jewishness has been played down. The Jewish characteristics in Mahler's music, he says, "are rejected from the start by Constantin Floros," and he adds that this continues to be the case in Mahler scholarship: "Nor do the opinions of Jewish musicians who are eminently qualified to speak on such topics [appear to] count for anything." He points to Bernstein, "who was able to identify the Hasidic idiom beyond doubt" and who, in a BBC broadcast of 1996, "conducted the third movement of the First Symphony with genuine Hasidic accents."<sup>136</sup>

It is this movement that has been cited most often as evidence of a Jewish voice in Mahler's music, though the passage in question is often characterized merely as "Bohemian" folk music.<sup>137</sup> Karbusický argues that Mahler's music has links back to the Hasidic music of Eastern European ghettos of the eighteenth century in which dance music is deployed as a remedy to misery. Mahler's lifelong juxtaposition of funeral march and dance music, dating back to his earliest childhood composition (a polka with funeral march introduction), is thus related to a specifically Jewish tradition. The Trio of the third movement of the First Symphony, with its interpolation of street music into the funeral march, is heard by many as an example



of *klezmer* music such as Mahler would have heard as a child and would have been heard on the streets of Vienna during his time there. Karbusický describes the first section of this movement (mm. 1–38) as “essentially a dirge in Hasidic minor-mode colouration” and the second section as a Hasidic dance melody (mm. 39–44) and “Hasidic march melody with parody (45–82).” His own summary is that “one comes to the inescapable conclusion that the Czech-Bohemian element in this movement of the First Symphony blends musically with the Hasidic-Yiddish. The one cannot be separated from the other.”<sup>138</sup>

Karbusický's example of a particular performance by Bernstein underlines that, as with so much in Mahler, the voice is defined by tone, accent, and gait. The slow tempo of some of Bernstein's recordings draws out an element that one does not hear in other performances (consider, for example, his live 1987 recording of the Fifth, where the opening movement laments with a definite accent).<sup>139</sup> More recently, the work of the jazz musician Uri Caine has brought into relief those *klezmer* elements that are, it would seem, latent within the material. His rendition of the funeral march of the Fifth Symphony, for example, exaggerates the distance between this music and the lament for a hero in Beethoven's *Eroica* or in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Instead, it is tinged with a wistful sentimentality and a quite different accent.<sup>140</sup> Karbusický also forces us to rethink the (mis)appropriation of the Second Symphony as a Christian work, which it clearly is not. The title “Resurrection” was simply transferred from the poem by Klopstock of which Mahler used a mere two verses for his choral Finale. But as Karbusický and others have insisted, the vision of apocalypse and resurrection at the end of the Second is Jewish rather than Christian, a fact demonstrated by its bifurcation between the two; a Christian work, Karbusický insists, would have begun with the chorale.<sup>141</sup>

As was so often the case, Mahler's contemporary critics heard in his music elements that we can no longer hear or, as Karbusický argues forcefully, modern reception and scholarship prefer to excise. Rudolf Louis, one of Mahler's fiercely anti-Semitic critics, summarized it thus in 1909: “What I find so utterly repellent about Mahler's music is the pronounced Jewishness of its underlying character.... It is abhorrent to me because it speaks Yiddish [*jüdelit*]. In other words it speaks the language of German music but with an accent, with the intonation and above all with the gestures of the Easterner, the all-too-Eastern Jew.”<sup>142</sup> One needs to be cautious here; a good deal of modernism was dismissed as “Jewish” in the decades leading up to national socialism, culminating in the inclusion of non-Jewish composers in the “*entartete Musik*” exhibition of May 1938. Louis's anti-Semitic tirade nevertheless underlines something true about Mahler's music: it speaks the language of the Austro-German tradition but with a different tone, accent, and voice. It remains contested whether this difference is explained by Mahler's Jewish origins (as is argued, paradoxically, both by anti-Semitic critics of Mahler's own time and by contemporary Jewish commentators, such as Karbusický) or whether it results

from a modernist attitude toward language (marked by irony, parody, exaggeration) that exceeds the specific category of Jewish identity. Looked at from another angle, the discomfort that Mahler caused in his listeners arose from his exacerbation of the fictions of symphonic unity latent in music since the end of the eighteenth-century; the gaps and fissures of its musical logic had been exposed a century earlier in Beethoven. The strategy by which Rudolf Louis and other anti-Semitic critics dealt with the legacy of inherent instability in their own culture was thus to project it as a contamination from an external source.

The question of irony provides a central example of how discussion of the Jewish elements in Mahler's music tends to hinge on aspects that are readily acknowledged in other discussions but simply accounted for differently. As we have seen earlier, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that Mahler's irony derives its specific form from German romanticism (most obviously from Jean Paul), but many commentators have related it also to Jewish culture. Vladimir Jankélévitch argues that Mahler's music is Jewish in its constant self-interrogation, especially in the scherzo movements.<sup>143</sup> Talia Pecker Berio poses the question of the relationship between Mahler's irony and his Jewishness in her discussion of the Jewish sense of "elsewhere"; irony, she suggests, is expressive of this bi-presence: "Irony is at the same time the expression and the remedy to this 'elsewhere.'" <sup>144</sup> The capacity to hold together contradictory attributes, she suggests, is a Jewish trait, one manifest in Mahler in the coexistence of pathos/banalities, sentimentality/irony, Wagnerian harmony/Viennese dances. She relates Mahler's self-conscious borrowing of materials to his Jewish experience, but this, like so many such claims, seems curiously restrictive since it would apply equally well to plenty of (non-Jewish) romantic ironists and their musical counterparts, such as Schumann.<sup>145</sup>

Raymond Knapp proposes a Jewish identity at work in the Scherzo of the Second Symphony, which embodies the "grotesque bustle" of the Jewish world that Mahler was to reject: "Mahler thus presents here a familiar enigma in the form of a double image: a Jewish composer who gives an overwhelmingly convincing performance of conversion to Christianity, but with a narrative inflected indelibly with the perspective of Jewish resistance.... For those who may be concerned to find Mahler's essential Jewishness, this seems to be a particularly vivid manifestation of just that: a Jewishness stubbornly unconverted and unassimilated, deeply embedded in what we might term his music's unconscious."<sup>146</sup> Knapp's Freudian model is intriguing and chimes in with recurrent ideas of my argument here; Mahler's music does its best to "perform" one identity, but it cannot entirely repress others from breaking through regardless. This seems to me to be productive in a way that more literal readings cannot be. Elsewhere, Francesca Draughon and Raymond Knapp, discussing the Third Symphony, argue that "the third movement uses the carnival to address the oppression of Vienna's Jewish minority by its Catholic majority—as well as, perhaps, the eastern lands under her dominion—constructing an inversion

fantasy in which the culturally oppressed Jew (or Gypsy, or Slav, etc.) surmounts the powers of the dominant group.”<sup>147</sup>

Draughon and Knapp, like Karbusický, suggest that Mahler's musical language may have been assimilated but was still spoken as that of an “outsider,” so that despite the familiarity of the language it retains an element of “foreignness.” This persuasive reading is supported by evidence that Mahler's contemporaries often heard his music this way. The authors quote from Paul Rosenfeld's *Musical Portraits; Interpretations of twenty Modern Composers* (1922): “For Mahler never spoke in his own idiom. His style is a mongrel affair.”<sup>148</sup> Divested of its insulting barb, Rosenfeld's observation has an important element of truth; it underlines the plural aspect of Mahler's musical voice in a radical, if offensive and negative way. But is what he identifies a consequence of Mahler's Jewishness or the nature of aesthetic modernism? It is difficult to distinguish between modernist techniques of defamiliarization, on the one hand, and signs of a specific political or ethnic outsider status, on the other. Draughon and Knapp are undoubtedly right in saying that Mahler speaks a “fluent German” music, but that it is also “a distorted version of that ideal”;<sup>149</sup> what is problematic is isolating that as a product of his Jewish identity (or of being articulate of Jewish experience) as opposed to the more general modernist expression of social alienation.

Such ambiguities multiply in the case of Mahler. Robert Hirschfeld, himself a Moravian Jew, did not link the weaknesses of Mahler's music specifically to an anti-Semitic attack, but the passage cited below hinges on a set of binary oppositions that would have been widely understood at the time to have embodied a German/Christian position (defined through an appeal to abstract logic and moral values) versus a Jewish/Other position (defined in relation of a decadent modern sensuality). Despite its vituperative tone, it captures brilliantly those very elements of Mahler's music which, today, are highly prized:

For symphonic structure to be engendered, one had to ensure that [the composer's] personality must possess inner strength and composure, continuous progress in a straight line in pursuit of a course, and the immense spiritual calm of formal shaping. Consider even two or three pages of a Mahler score...a cult of trivialities and details, at each slightest interval, a nervous twitching, speeding up, shifting in dynamics and timbre, restless signals....This is what dilettantes and the unmusical find riveting in Mahler's symphonies; in the unrest, they think they recognize genius.<sup>150</sup>

What is remarkable about the opposition that Hirschfeld implies is that it is the direct inversion of what was palpably the case in Austrian culture—that an ethical Jewish position, inclined to abstraction as in the work of Schoenberg or Kraus, stood in tension with the aesthetic hedonism of the official Catholic culture of Austrian society. Stephen Beller suggests that, “placed in the context of Austrian

baroque Catholicism, the Jewish emphasis on the ethical responsibility of the individual stands out much more than it would in other contexts.”<sup>151</sup> Beller points to what he calls an “aesthetics of power” in the official culture of Austrian society, one he traces back to the social symbolism of Austrian monasteries, their architecture and location. Their message, he says, was “the need to submit to authority, but also the glory of that authority, expressed in aesthetic grandeur,” an idea that one might think is embodied in the music of Bruckner but still echoes loud and clear in the Finale of Mahler’s Third Symphony. Beller continues: “The beauty of the forms chosen to convey the revealed truth of the religion came to overshadow those truths; from being a means of propaganda aesthetic form came to be valued on its own terms. By the mid nineteenth century this had led to Austria possessing a culture of aesthetic celebration of authority which had a large element of aesthetic enjoyment for its own sake.”<sup>152</sup>

These oppositions are heard in the recurrent contradictions of Mahler’s style. Fiercely ethical, inclined toward a spiritual idealism and absolute authority, Mahler’s music is at the same time nostalgic for an easygoing Austrian *Gemütlichkeit* and delights in protracted passages of self-contained sensual beauty. In some ways, Mahler was too German for the Austrians; he was typical of Jews of his generation in upholding the ideals of German culture more forcefully than many non-Jews. The Eighth Symphony, uniting medieval lyric, baroque counterpoint, the choral symphony, and the words of Goethe, created an overwhelming statement of his pan-German ideals. It was, according to Peter Franklin, Mahler’s “last public affirmation of his intellectual Germanness.”<sup>153</sup> In this, it would seem, Mahler was outwardly successful. Alma referred to the first performance in 1910 as “the long-awaited, incomparable triumph, one such as no other composer of this age has experienced.”<sup>154</sup> No less a figure than Thomas Mann, on hearing the premiere of the Eighth Symphony in 1910, referred to Mahler as “a man who seems to me to embody the most serious and sacred artistic purpose of our age.”<sup>155</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, however, sounds a skeptical note that many have taken up since, suggesting that the Eighth Symphony was a rearguard action, an attempt to stem the tide in the face of imminent disintegration and fragmentation. It is “untimely” in its insistence on a cultural moment that had already passed, though perhaps one in which we still want to believe.

Such affirmations of collective unity in Mahler have to be set against a quite different quality, one that Otto Weininger had identified as the essential trait of the Jewish nonbeliever. In Weininger’s account, in *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), the modern condition was epitomized by “innere Vielfältigkeit” (inner multiplicity).<sup>156</sup> As Stephen Beller summarizes it: “Whereas the Aryan always had a clear view of every situation, the Jew always saw various possibilities, for there was no unity to his character. He lacked the *Einfalt* of belief.” Mahler’s music, if not Mahler the man, was caught between these two positions—between the performance of a Catholic aesthetic of power and its critical opposition in the radical multiplicity

identified by Weininger. His music resists being reduced to either pole. It takes up all of the voices that surrounded him, whether in the market square in Iglau or the cosmopolitan streets of Vienna, Budapest, Hamburg, Prague, or New York. It draws audibly on the real worlds in which he moved but never evokes them except to distance them through aesthetic reworking. It epitomizes the truism that music never reproduces the social or political but takes up its oppositions and reconfigures them. If we wish to tease out those constituent elements again, we would do well to remember that they no longer map directly or literally back onto the social world from which they came.

DropBooks

# 8

## Performing Authenticity

### Reception and Performance

It is so verbose, superficial, theatrical, unreal....Mahler is a musical comedian, a practical joker of the worst kind, a man who imitates and pretends feelings.

—Paul Moos, *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*, March 11, 1897

This self-complacent music keeps posturing as if in front of a mirror, this pose for sublimity, that for passion, this for renunciation, that for remorse.

—Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, December 28, 1904

One wanted to believe in one or the other facet of this music; either of them had to be inauthentic—a calculated means to achieve external contrasts....And yet Mahler's greatness is based on precisely this juxtaposition of fundamentally different methods of artistic expression....One therefore suspects inauthenticity in an art that appears simultaneously naïve and profound; one presumes affectation on one side or the other.

—Max Loewengard, *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, September 13, 1905

In Mahler a Bohemian musician sat hand in hand with a young German craftsman and the demon of the metaphysician. He was a baroque angel with a trumpet and a singer's mouth. Within him were both a devout believer and an actor of the most elemental kind.

—Hermann Bahr, *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, April 1920

Hearing all of Mahler's works in succession produces the image not of a coherent personality but rather of one who straddles two eras and struggles with himself—someone who experiences the tragedy of all great conflicts. The most profound mysticism vies with a popularity touching on the banal. Endlessly intricate polyphony is intertwined with yearning for the most eloquent melody. The most genuine emotion is mixed with a drive to the grandest means and unrestrained excess, as well as to hidden theatricality and masks. The maturest knowledge of form is deconstructed into an unending breath of cyclical series.

—Oskar Bie, *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten*, May 25, 1920

Mahler looks like an actor, but makes no bad impression.

—Max Kalbeck, diary entry, March 1897

The difference between Beethoven and Mahler is the difference between watching a great man walk down the street and watching a great actor play the part of a great man walking down the street.

—Aaron Copland, *Our New Music* (1941)

Hermann Bahr and Oskar Bie, looking back from the Amsterdam Mahler Festival of 1920, draw out the paradox of the man and his music: “both a devout believer and an actor of the most elemental kind” in which “the most genuine emotion is mixed with a drive...to hidden theatricality and masks.” In this they summarize an idea that was key to the reception of Mahler’s music in his own lifetime but one that is almost entirely expunged from Mahler reception today: a self-consciousness about its own expressive language and a self-awareness that music, like theater, is acting and make-believe. Copland’s more recent remark points not to any superficiality in the music or to any deception on the part of the composer, but, rather, to the changed historical position of Mahler, his musical language, and the symphony as a cultural statement.<sup>1</sup> Carl Dahlhaus identifies this as a change in musical tone, suggesting that, after 1850, “it became either forced or resigned, as though, for all the continued adherence to the romantic idea, the idea had lost its substance.” Indeed, he might almost have had Mahler in mind when talking of the neoromanticism of the later nineteenth-century: “It is dogged by an awareness, or at the very least by an obscure presentiment, that the romanticism to which it holds fast—or of which it is the fulfillment, as Wagner’s champions claim for the founder of Bayreuth—is no longer ‘substantial’ (in the objective, historico-philosophical sense, not the subjective, psychological sense); it is not its sincerity that is in question, but its historical authenticity.”<sup>2</sup> Hans Pfitzner perhaps had something similar in mind when he said of Mahler the composer that he was, at one and the same time, “subjectively authentic [*echt*] and objectively inauthentic [*unecht*].”<sup>3</sup>

Mahler’s music is not unusual in framing its voices (the operatic aria has an instrumental introduction, and the orchestra prepares the first entry of the soloist in the concerto), but one of its distinctive aspects is its self-conscious exaggeration of the frames. Drawing attention to the framing devices tends to alter the status of the musical voice, underlining its nature as artifice and performance, suggesting that it might not be taken at face value or that it might be heard as if it were in quotation marks. The first chapter of Theodor Adorno’s study of Mahler is aptly titled “Fanfare and Curtain” to underline the theatrical manner in which Mahler stages his musical voices. Mahler’s music rarely just sings, as if singing were self-evident and unproblematic; more often, it contains its own announcement and its own staging directions. But such framing gestures create a distance in respect to the genre and voice to which they point. In a traveling circus—such as Mahler might have witnessed as a child—the

roll on the drum and fanfare on the out-of-tune trumpet that precedes the raising of the makeshift curtain on a tiny, improvised stage makes for an ironic and distanced relationship to the grand theatrical model it imitates. Mahler's music often achieves a similar effect because it takes on the tone of other music (of the down-at-heel traveling circus, of the military band, of rustic musicians) but deploys them within the aesthetic space of the symphony and the concert hall. The disparity between the material and the vehicle calls into question the status of the voice that is thus framed.

The second of the two Serenades in the Seventh Symphony provides a good example. The clichéd vocal opening of the solo violin acts as a rhetorical frame—the equivalent, perhaps, of the traveling performer walking onto the makeshift stage with a placard announcing “4th Movement: Serenade!” In this it anticipates the quite different musical style of Stravinsky, as exhibited in works like *The Soldier's Tale*. The idea of the minstrel's serenade in Mahler's Seventh is overdetermined by no less than three vocal-accompaniment instruments—the guitar, mandolin, and harp. The theatrical staging of the singer and his serenade makes for a strange interplay between this little serenade band and the rest of the orchestra, as if the narrator and the characters of the narrated tale become entwined.<sup>4</sup> The juxtaposition of simple serenade (mm. 213ff.) and full orchestral string writing in a highly charged, expressionist voice constitutes a subtle but explicit playing with voice, a distancing of one in relation to another.

This self-awareness, to which Dahlhaus, Copland, and others have pointed, is that of the music rather than the composer. To suggest that this music is itself a kind of performance is not to doubt the sincerity of the composer, his religious or metaphysical beliefs, the material realities of his life, or the psychological realities of a character caught between anxiety, self-doubt, and affirmation, all of which undoubtedly have their impact on the music. But it leads to a critical question at odds with the general tenor of Mahler reception today: how do we understand a music that speaks to us as if what it said were true but which, at the same time, acknowledges its own artifice and its own sense of performance? This is, as Dahlhaus and other have suggested, a matter of tone,<sup>5</sup> a fact that makes Mahler's music more than usually dependent on interpretation—in the sense of criticism as well as performance. He often anticipated misunderstanding of his own music, and specifically of its tone, as is born out by his anticipation of the negative reception of movements in a naive or childlike tone. With characteristic humor he lamented in a letter to Alma in 1904, “Would that I could perform my symphonies for the first time fifty years after my death!”<sup>6</sup>

Fifty years after his death was exactly when Mahler's music began to receive the broad attention and popular success that hitherto had been denied it. But, as Leon Botstein has argued, the Mahler renaissance that began in the 1960s was defined by a very different kind of tone, one that suggested a “consolatory” function through an emphasis of its traditional elements and which highlighted its sonorous and melodic beauty rather than its ironic or negative elements. In part, this was because the rediscovery of Mahler became entangled with a wider reaction against a hard-line avant-garde, such that his music became “emblematic of the emancipation from modernism.”<sup>7</sup> By this



account, Mahler becomes the most salient figure in a rediscovery and reaffirmation of an essentially late-romantic, tonal tradition that continues unabated to this day, of which some of the key figures would be Schreker, Zemlinsky, Pfitzner, and Korngold. Mahler's expressive musical language and rich orchestral sound world seemed to enshrine the perseverance of a romantic subjectivity, underwritten by a mode of reception, both popular and scholarly, that read his music overwhelmingly in terms of autobiography.<sup>8</sup> In the process, the modernist elements of Mahler's music were all but expunged. "The aspects of negativity, rebellion, innovation, and resistance Adorno located in Mahler's music," Botstein insists of contemporary performance, "are neither heard by the audience nor communicated from the stage."<sup>9</sup> He continues:

The sound of today's performances has diminished the heterophony, the discontinuities, the brutalities, the angularity, and the long arc of negation and critique. A homogenized lush sound is favored, as are the obvious elements of affirmation, triumph, spectacle, and drama—the rhetoric and gesture of the grandiose. Mahler's ties to Schoenberg and modernism have been severed, as has his immanent critique of conventional culture and civilization. The teeth, so to speak, have been extracted, leaving a body of work favored for its richness of sound; its lyrical, albeit sad, accessibility; and its stirring monumentality.<sup>10</sup>

It is clear from the comments of Mahler's contemporaries, such as those cited above, that in his own time his music was heard as a more complex and contradictory proposition—as profound and naïve at the same time, as a music of authentic disclosure and expression but also of artifice and deception. The negative response of many of Mahler's earliest critics were provoked less by the sense that Mahler was not a good composer than by a resistance to what the music appeared to say. Botstein thus cites critics like Otto Schumann and Karl Blessinger, who identified in Mahler's music many of the same features later highlighted by Adorno, such as the ironic tone, or the hollowness of some of Mahler's affirmations. It is highly ironic, Botstein comments, that Mahler's anti-Semitic and even Nazi critics "may have responded to him more pointedly and profoundly than have his postmodern, late twentieth-century advocates."<sup>11</sup> Although they rejected what Adorno was later to value in his music, both shared an awareness of the tensions of his music that contemporary reception tends to neutralize. Such contradictions suggest that Mahler's music may be poorly understood as emblematic of a one-dimensional aesthetic—of a romantic voice against a modern one, or a postmodern voice against both. Its expressive power, its aesthetic and intellectual reach, and its historical significance are ultimately located in the tension *between* such positions. A music that is more than usually reliant on tone and irony, subtle deconstructive gestures, exaggerations, linguistic cul-de-sacs, and stylistic contradictions fares badly in popular reception with whose affirmative stance the music itself is also complicit. Mahler's music is often affirmative, consolatory, withdrawn, or sentimental, but it is never *merely* thus.

Consider David B. Greene's question as to whether the Finale of the Fifth Symphony, for example, is "psychologically convincing."<sup>12</sup> The problem, he goes on to describe, is the ambivalence of the music and the complexity of Mahler's tone: "For Mahler is not only ironic: the music confirms the values of heroism, poignancy, lilt or good cheer at the same time that it mocks itself for being heroic, poignant, lilt-ing or jocular, and it mocks those who unreflectedly applaud heroism, poignancy, lilt or good cheer at the same time that it mocks those who unreflectively mock all these dispositions."<sup>13</sup> It is a responsibility of criticism to draw out such opposing currents. A discussion of Mahler's musical voices, their provenance, tone, and function, necessarily exposes such different valencies. Considering Mahler's musical materials in this way, and their deployment within the temporal unfolding of his works, underlines the metatextual concerns of this music—its self-conscious concern with its own conditions as an expressive language—while yet, at the same time, proposing an urgent content of the highest importance. As changing modes of reception make clear, this is certainly related to how we hear or interpret Mahler's music. But it is not *only* a matter of how we hear; it is also a tension inscribed in the musical materials themselves and in their deployment in the temporal unfolding of the work. Reactivating the ambivalence of Mahler's tone, like cleaning off centuries of discoloration on old oil paintings, is one way of heightening the vibrancy of the work. Such is the task of performance itself but also of criticism and, in the end, of listening.

Jens Malte Fischer subtitled his biographical study of Mahler *Der fremde Vertraute* (The unfamiliar familiar),<sup>14</sup> echoing a similar idea in a volume edited by Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, *Mahler: Der unbekannte Bekannt* (Mahler: The unknown known).<sup>15</sup> It is a function of all criticism to make the familiar new, or even strange, but Mahler's music would seem to lend itself especially well to such treatment: first, because his popularity is apt to solidify all too quickly around a fixed identity (that of the romantic artist inscribing his own life in his work), but, second, because his own music proceeds by a self-critical process in which the familiar is made strange. Raymond Monelle, for example, points to a kind of "*Verfremdung* which deforms and destroys a feeling of authoriality" in Mahler's music, achieved by "a certain kind of exaggeration, slightly overstressing topic features; a failure of technique, either in development or in texture; a grotesque inappropriateness of setting."<sup>16</sup> The ambivalent nature of Mahler reception is thus a corollary of the music itself. Monelle makes a distinction between a romantic and a modernist voice that captures this tension well: "The temptation, for the Romantic artist, was always to identify with the subjectivity of the text. The task of modernism would be to dismantle this identification."<sup>17</sup> Mahler's music is caught between these poles. Its continuing fascination for us lies partly in its refusal to give up the romantic identification while insisting on the modernist self-analysis. Its rise, in the latter part of the twentieth century, to a central position in the performance canon has to do with the fact that we too are caught between the same poles, inhabitants of an age whose

divided consciousness asserts the absolute value of a rich, subtle, and expressive subjectivity while at the same time self-aware to the point of nonchalance that such expression is fabricated in social and conventional acts. Mahler's music, Monelle writes, "sets a question mark on all artistic expression,"<sup>18</sup> and, in that, it is of our age as much as of its own.

How the music is performed can change everything. Much attention has been given recently to the way in which quite different performances of the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony confer on it a quite different tone and thus meaning. Paul Banks, Donald Mitchell, and Gilbert Kaplan have shown that some performances of this movement are so slow that they take double the time apparently taken by Mahler and his immediate protégés. It is believed that Mahler's own performance lasted about seven and half minutes; Mengelberg's took about seven minutes and that of Bruno Walter about eight minutes. By comparison, performances by Hermann Scherchen and Bernard Haitink approach fifteen minutes.<sup>19</sup> Paul Banks concludes "that the tempo, and hence nature of this movement, has been greatly distorted; as a result the overall structure of the symphony has been altered."<sup>20</sup> Gilbert Kaplan argues that the nature of the movement alters in this process from that of a light love song to a much darker and more introspective piece.<sup>21</sup> One might choose not to follow Kaplan, Banks, and Mitchell in arguing for a "right" way to perform this movement (i.e., one that respects its reference to a vocal genre), but, either way, the example shows clearly how performance changes the nature of the musical tone and therefore content.

While Botstein's account of the Mahler renaissance allies it with a kind of anti-modernism, Carl Dahlhaus and others have underlined its relationship to postmodern trends in the music of the later twentieth century:

Mahler symphonies are no less a phenomenon of the turn of the century than of the 1960's and 1970's, and it would distort their place in music history if we neglected to analyze the overlap between post-serial music and the Mahler renaissance. However blurred the question of what caused what, there is no way of denying that the Mahler wave, the interest in collage techniques, the discovery of Ives, and a parodistic bent towards the popular are all interlinked.<sup>22</sup>

One of the most salient events in this belated Mahler reception was undoubtedly Luciano Berio's use of Mahler's music in the third movement of his *Sinfonia* of 1968. The use of the Scherzo of Mahler's Second Symphony as a kind of *cantus firmus* to a proliferating expansion of fragmentary quotations and allusions to a diverse range of musical works takes its lead from Mahler's own style but also analyzes it through exaggeration. The romantic, modern, and postmodern meet in Berio's movement, as Mahler's ironic treatment of his own song on a *Wunderhorn* text, itself alluding to Schumann, becomes the basis for a thoroughly postmodern collage of quotations. In doing so, Berio signaled what musicology came to understand only two or three

decades later, that “the stylistic and generic plurality of ‘voices’ in [Mahler’s] symphonies has been prized as a function of their subversively modernist, even postmodernist character.”<sup>23</sup> Berio embodies in one movement a version of Lydia Goehr’s “imaginary museum of musical works” and chooses as the space in which to site his exhibits a composer “whose work appears to carry in itself the weight of the whole of music history.”<sup>24</sup> Thomas Schäfer, in a fascinating study of how later twentieth-century composers have responded to Mahler’s music, not only finds many points of contact between Berio’s movement and Mahler’s (including their openness to a broad intertextuality), but also demonstrates how other composers, including Schnittke, Henze, Ligeti, and Rihm, draw out different aspects of Mahler’s music that continue to resonate in the postmodernism of the 1960s and beyond. For all Mahler’s connections to the Schoenberg School, it was nevertheless his music, with its overt qualities of heterogeneity and simultaneity, which was taken up in the 1960s as part of a wider reaction against the imperatives to unity and order enshrined in the postwar reception of serialism.

## Authenticity and Self-Critique

Oscar Wilde sublimely remarked that “all bad poetry is sincere.” Doubtless it would be wrong to say that all great poetry is insincere, but of course almost all of it necessarily tells lies, fictions essential to literary art.

—Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*

His whole life was dismembered by the sudden breaking off of that which had been begun and which was always freshly begun again.

—Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler* (1914)

By attributing to the traditional words and syntax of music intentions which they no longer possessed, he signaled his recognition of the rupture. The inauthenticity of the language of music becomes the expression of its substance.

—Theodor Adorno, *Mahler. A Musical Physiognomy* (1960)

As soon as you have finished your story...you seem to be ashamed of what you’ve said. Why is that?

—Aglaya to Prince Mishkin in Dostoyevsky’s *The Idiot*

An art that is self-aware, that juxtaposes expressive statements with devices that draw attention to their own artifice, is by no means peculiar to the twentieth century and its idea of modernity.<sup>25</sup> Mahler’s reactivation of romantic irony and *Humor* underlines an essential kinship between the early romantic, the early modern, and the postmodern. Ernst Behler, whose account of literary modernism begins unequivocally in the late eighteenth century, points to the pre-1800 fragments of

Friedrich Schlegel as indicative of the level of self-reflective irony at the heart of literary romanticism. In language that anticipates the *Vorschule der Ästhetik* of Jean Paul, Schlegel called poetry “a truly transcendental buffoonery”<sup>26</sup> and, in terms suggestive of Mahler’s *modus operandi*, described ironic literature as an “alternating flow of speech and counter-speech, or rather of thought and counter-thought,” qualities evident in his own philosophical fragments, which Behler describes as a “constant alternation of self-creation and self-destruction.”<sup>27</sup>

Mahler’s music sometimes addresses the audience like an actor who steps beyond the edge of the proscenium arch and across the footlights, where his makeup becomes visible under the house lights and his costume is no longer quite convincing, but who still speaks with the same impassioned expression as he did a moment earlier on the main stage. In this it echoes Schlegel’s 1797 definition of irony as “a permanent parabasis.”<sup>28</sup> The Greek term *parabasis* refers, literally, to the stepping forward of the chorus in classical drama, a step toward the audience and away from the aesthetic space designated by the world of the drama itself. Schlegel employed it to refer to the deliberate undermining of the aesthetic world by the sudden foregrounding of the author’s voice within his own fictional work. It was a favorite device of Ludwig Tieck and later of Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann. In the 1830s, Schumann employed a similar technique in his piano music, whose debts to these authors is well known.<sup>29</sup> But a century after Schlegel, Mahler’s use of this technique in symphonic music makes rather a different proposition. Schumann’s *Carnival*, like the play of *commedia* masks in French neoclassicism a century later, is predicated on a lightness of touch quite different from the assumptions of the Austro-German symphony. Mahler’s use of *parabasis* to expose the artificiality of symphonic discourse has weightier consequences because here it is deployed side by side with music that projects, in a sustained manner, an illusion of aesthetic autonomy.

Mahler thus brings together two quite different impulses of romantic thought, which Ernst Behler underlines as the difference between Schlegel’s philosophy of irony and Hegel’s philosophy of the Absolute. Mahler’s music, one might suggest, juxtaposes in the same work what Behler identifies as “two fundamentally contradictory types of knowledge that cannot be reduced to a common ground and therefore form a complete and unresolvable opposition.” Against the closed totality of the Hegelian system, Schlegel insists on an infinite and always fragmentary process; Hegelian teleology and universalism are opposed by ironic play and particularity.<sup>30</sup> These intertwined oppositions define the nature of Mahler’s modernity—its attempt to forge a self-contained whole juxtaposed with a “self-destructive ability . . . to articulate its own fictionality.”<sup>31</sup> Closer to our own time, Paul de Man has underlined the way in which literary irony critiques language and its claim to authentic expression. “The ironic language splits the subject into an empirical self that exists in a state of inauthenticity and a self that exists only in the form of a language that asserts the knowledge of this inauthenticity. This does not, however, make it into an authentic language, for to know inauthenticity is not the same as to be authentic.”<sup>32</sup> Mahler’s

music, in spite of Mahler himself, draws attention to the inauthenticity of its own language while nevertheless simultaneously proposing an authentic expression. Its tendency to shoot itself down at moments of utmost intensity—witness the first and last movements of the Tenth—comes close to de Man's claim that irony "can know this inauthenticity but can never overcome it...[and] can only restate and repeat it on an increasingly conscious level."<sup>33</sup>

Late Mahler does something very similar. It does not allow itself to fall into a mere assertion of authentic subjectivity, which would be either sentimental or hollow; indeed, the sentimental is deliberately foregrounded in Mahler in order for it to be distinguished as such. Neither does this music propose a transcendental statement, as if the limits of language had been superseded. Rather, its self-critique consists in this: that by repeated acknowledgment of those limits it projects a consciousness that knows it is not coterminous with an inauthentic language. This is what lies behind the cyclic, repetitive forms in late Mahler and behind its exaggeration of tone and gesture, passionately deploying the means of an authentic expression while at the same time ironically underlining their inadequacy. "Instead of a completed work, as I dreamed, I leave behind a fragmentary, incomplete work, as man is fated to do."<sup>34</sup> Mahler's valedictory message to the staff of the Hofoper in 1907 is as fitting in relation to his own music as to his achievements as director of the opera house. Eberhardt Klemm underlines that "all great late works tend towards fragmentation, leaving behind the idea of rounded, closed works of art," locating the peculiar quality of Mahler's in a "disavowal of the idealism of his earlier works."<sup>35</sup>

This disavowal was, nevertheless, a constant presence in Mahler's music; even in the earlier works it appears as an exposure of the conventionality of his own musical materials. The young Alma Schindler, in the first few weeks of her courtship with Mahler, confided to her diary several times that she was much less impressed by him as a composer than as a conductor. "Mahler sent me all his songs, which disappointed me because they struck me as insincere. I shall tell him as much too," she wrote in her entry of November 29, 1901.<sup>36</sup> Why insincere? Perhaps because, as she outlined elsewhere, his *Wunderhorn* songs seemed to affect a naïveté of expression that was hard to accept as sincere in a climate of lyrical intensity represented at that time by the songs of Hugo Wolf or of Alma's new teacher and lover, Alexander Zemlinsky. Yet toward the end of the slow movement of the Fourth Symphony (whose premiere took place in Vienna in the same week as Alma's diary entry) is a passage with the performance direction *Innig* (sincere or heartfelt). It is a relatively rare direction in Mahler's music but one that denotes a particular tone of musical voice and one here differentiated clearly from the rather macabre *Humor* of the scherzo and the childlike naïveté of the Finale.<sup>37</sup> Almost certainly, Mahler borrowed the term from Schumann, for whom it also marked a particular kind of music.<sup>38</sup> But it raises the question as to how we, as performers, listeners, or readers, should understand this specific indication of sincerity. Should we assume, with the young Alma, that the music before or after such a passage is insincere?

Like all ironists, Mahler plays a dangerous game. Exposing art as artifice, making authorial intrusions into the fictive text, having actors reflect on theater as make-believe all have the same effect: the audience necessarily doubts everything. Once a face is revealed to be a mask, all identities are suspect. But perhaps this is a perversely exaggerated way of reading Mahler. For all the moments of parody, irony, and stylistic play, “in the end” does his music not speak with an intense, committed and authentic expression? Nowhere is this sensed more than in the case of what one might call Mahler’s “Adagio voice,” the most concentrated and uninterrupted statement of an expressive, lyrical voice and thereby the model of a coherent, unified, transcendent subject for which it speaks.<sup>39</sup> The “Adagio voice” seems to stand as evidence against any deconstructive reading of Mahler’s music, as a challenge to any reduction of it to a postmodern “language game.” Its contrast with the plurality of voices that surrounds it proposes a structural and semantic opposition; in the face of unchecked parody and kitsch, the “Adagio voice” appears to affirm an idea of authenticity—as if, after the daemonic negativity of the carnivalesque, undermining the idea of any stable identity in its parade of musical masks, the Adagio speaks from the heart, as if it were in some way, an attempt to speak with Mahler’s *own* voice.<sup>40</sup>

But here the argument necessarily encounters another reversal. Given the extent to which Mahler’s musical voices have revealed themselves to be borrowed, constructed, and ironic, how is the “Adagio voice” different from any other in his musical theater? How can this voice lay claim to a different status? If the symphonic discourse as a whole reveals itself to be made up of so many received, conventional, generic voices, does the “Adagio voice” not take its place as simply one more such musical borrowing? Even as it presents itself self-consciously as different, as a voice of authentic identity in a world of *inauthenticity*, is its claim not unmasked as mere pretension? Mikhail Bakhtin puts it thus in relation to the novel: “[Even] when the novelist comes forward with his own unitary and fully affirming language (without any distancing, refraction or qualifications) he knows that such language is not self-evident and is not in itself incontestable, that it is uttered in a heteroglot environment, that such a language must be championed, purified, defended, motivated.”<sup>41</sup> Despite the rhetoric of authenticity, the gesture made by the “Adagio voice” would thus necessarily be hollow because the rest of the symphony has already undermined the possibility of such a claim. The “Adagio voice,” as the most concentrated statement of this idea of expression, thus presents itself as a kind of test case for Mahler’s musical language as a whole. Understanding Mahler’s music, it seems, might involve making sense of the paradox of a voice that is heard as unquestionably authentic but in a musical context that implies that nothing can be taken at face value, that all its voices are equally generic, borrowed, and conventional.

Analyzing what constitutes the “Adagio voice” may thus bring us closer to the heart of the defining ambivalence of Mahler’s music. It is, of course,

defined less by a simple tempo marking than by a kind of musical material presented self-consciously as the authentic voice of an interior, lyrical subject. In the symphonies such a voice often functions as a structural opposition to a more dramatic voice with which a movement opens: the *sehr gesangvoll* melody in the Finale of the First Symphony [Fig. 16] or the E major “Gesang” in the first movement of the Second Symphony [Fig. 3] provide good examples.<sup>42</sup> At other times, this voice determines the character of a slow movement, but not all slow movements exhibit this voice; neither are all the instances of it confined to slow movements. Nevertheless, prime examples are undoubtedly the finales of the Third and Ninth symphonies, the first and last movements of the Tenth, and the Adagietto of the Fifth.<sup>43</sup> The Finale of the Third Symphony is the first sustained appearance of this voice in Mahler’s music. The hymnlike, religious tone arises from a slow 4/4 meter and a melodic unfolding in choral voicing that stays wedded to stepwise, diatonic motion. Its melodic unfolding is expanded initially through counterpoint and orchestration, creating a solemn but highly expressive processional.

The semantic force of its tone and gait derives, in significant part, from its provenance in the slow movements of Beethoven. Margaret Notley concludes from her fascinating study of the “cult of the classical adagio” that the high status of the adagio in the later nineteenth century had to do with “a later generation’s idealization of an earlier time, coupled with a perception of its own shortcomings.”<sup>44</sup> Contemporary critics bemoaned the lack of true Adagio movements in the work of late nineteenth-century composers, complaints that underline that to write a true Adagio at this time might well imply a retrospective act, an attempt to re-create or even restore an element of earlier music; the Adagio of Bruckner’s String Quintet, premiered in Vienna in 1885, was greeted ecstatically as a rare exception.<sup>45</sup> The Adagio was typically understood as the musical vehicle of sublime sentiment, as a signifier of an otherworldly or transcendent content; paradigmatic here is Arthur Seidl’s discussion in his influential publication of 1887, *Vom Musikalisch-Erhabenen: Prolegomena zur Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, of the Adagio from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.<sup>46</sup> Without exception, it was Beethoven who was seen as the originator of the true Adagio. In the theoretical writings of Ernst Kurth, the late quartets of Beethoven provided a model for an “Adagio voice” that was closely linked to the Wagnerian ideal of “unending melody.” Notley’s summary of Kurth’s theory of “unending melody” might serve just as well, without alteration, as a description of an Adagio by Mahler:

Such a melody arises from an ongoing polyphony, an intense interweaving of voices, rather than a single line, as well as from the overflowing of one potentially closed formal section into the next in order to blur beginnings and endings, to make them difficult if not impossible to determine. In such a texture, motives and themes have no primary, stable shapes and remain



in flux; their continual elaboration and interpenetration causes unending melody to seem almost synonymous with the fluid process of making transitions.<sup>47</sup>

For Theodor Helm, as for Ernst Kurth, a paradigmatic work in this respect was the Cavatina from Beethoven's Quartet in B flat, Op. 130. Helm's description of this movement might also be referring to a later Mahlerian Adagio: "From the timid beginning to the softly fading final chord [it] constitutes a single unending melody in which there are no formal connecting links, no so-called passages; rather, everything appears without exception as most tenderly eloquent song [*Gesang*]." This is taken from Helm's study of Beethoven's quartets, published in book form in 1885, which, as Notley underlines, reveals an "extraordinary focus" on the Adagio.<sup>48</sup>

It is noteworthy that Mahler avoided any attempt at a real Adagio movement in his first two symphonies. In the Third, however, not only did he write a sustained Adagio, he placed it as the Finale in a manner that seemed to parallel Helm's suggestion that, in Beethoven, the Adagio was often the crux of the entire work. Stephen Hefling suggests that Mahler's model may well have been the slow movements of the late Beethoven quartets (especially Op. 135 and also the *Heiliger Dankgesang* movement of Op. 132).<sup>49</sup>

But if the historical resonance of its tone and gesture might be traced, quite directly, to the slow movement style of Beethoven, it is undoubtedly mediated through the reception of that style throughout the nineteenth century. This would certainly include the *Adagio religioso* of Mendelssohn's Second Symphony or the *Adagio espressivo* of Schumann's Second, but it was an operatic rather than symphonic work, Wagner's *Parsifal*, whose predominant Adagio voice provided Mahler with a paradigm of a music that raises the subjective lyrical voice to the status of an absolute religiosity. In Bruckner, despite Mahler's equivocal view of his music, he would have found that voice once again enshrined within the symphony.

The much disputed relation between Bruckner and Mahler is located more firmly here than in any other aspect of their very different approaches to the symphony. Pointing to a new tone in the Adagio Finale of Mahler's Ninth Symphony and the opening movement of the Tenth, Rudolf Stephan insisted that "Mahler's later work . . . is unimaginable without Bruckner."<sup>50</sup> The specific echoes of Bruckner's Adagio music are perhaps less important than the generic model Mahler inherited. The slow processional, solemn and noble, of the *Andante. Feierlich* of Bruckner's Second Symphony mediates the C minor voice of Beethoven—of the *Pathétique* sonata but also of the slow movement of the *Eroica* Symphony. The latter finds an audible echo in the opening of the Finale of Mahler's Third Symphony, which seems to pick up the gesture and tone of Beethoven's turn to E flat major (m. 17 of the *Marcia funèbre*). Mahler's religioso tone at this point also owes something to the hymnlike string writing Bruckner deploys in the Adagios of the Third, Sixth, and Seventh symphonies.<sup>51</sup>

The link back to Beethoven's slow movements can be laid bare by a little excavation in the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony, whose opening is a kind of postromantic composing out of a classical Adagio. A number of Beethoven slow movements show some obvious similarities in melodic construction, harmony, and phrase structure. Without suggesting it as the origin of any direct modeling, a comparison with the Adagio of the early piano sonata Op. 2/1, might serve to illustrate the point (Exs. 8.1a, 8.1b). The opening of Mahler's slow movement hinges on the ambiguous shift from an opening tonic 6/4 chord to a root position in bar 3, via a weak dominant seventh on the last beat of bar 2. As if metrically separated from this background, the anacrusis figure in the first violin rises from  $\hat{5}$  to  $\hat{8}$  with a characteristic suspension on  $\hat{7}$  on the downbeat. In the Beethoven example, this progression is presented in a straightforward classical manner; in the Mahler, it is elongated and blurred by delayed voice-leading and suspensions. Similarly, the melody in the Beethoven moves directly to the upper  $\hat{5}$  before descending stepwise to a half-close on  $\hat{2}$ , whereas in the Mahler this same process is more drawn out, the half close not being reached until m. 9. The manner in which the 6/3 chord propels the melody in the Beethoven (downbeat of m. 3) is echoed in the Mahler (m. 5), as is a pervasive use of chromatic steps within voice-leading descents.

**Example 8.1a** Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2/1, second movement, mm. 1–4

**Adagio**

The musical score for Example 8.1a shows the first four measures of the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2/1. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The key signature has one flat (F minor) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff. The first measure is marked 'dolce' and the second measure is marked 'p' (piano). The melody in the right hand begins with a half note F4, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, and Bb4. The bass line begins with a half note F3, followed by quarter notes G3, A3, and Bb3. The score includes fingerings: 5, 6, 7 for the right hand and 6, 5 for the left hand. The final cadence is on a half note F3 in the right hand and a half note F3 in the left hand.

**Example 8.1b** Fifth Symphony, fourth movement, mm. 1–11

*Sehr langsam*

*pp*

5 6 7 8

4

5 5 4 3

8

2 5 6 7 8

It is not that Beethoven forms a direct model for Mahler, but that a certain type of Beethovenian movement stands behind a certain type of Mahlerian one. My point is not about the use of any particular melodic construction, phrase structure, or harmonic detail but the particular configuration of several such elements that combine to form a stylistic link between the two. What is significant in Mahler, however, is precisely the departure from the Beethovenian model, the deformations of the known gestures. It is these that create the sense of simultaneously drawing upon the genre (with all its musical and extramusical associations) and distancing itself from it. The effect of playing Mahler's opening on the piano (with too much pedal) may well suggest a half-recollected, half-improvised reconstruction of the Beethoven model. The sense of wistful nostalgia so often associated with the Adagietto has its roots in this

relationship.<sup>52</sup> Mahler's evocation of Beethoven thus signals a self-conscious historicism; in drawing upon the model to reference the tradition, it also re-presents the qualities associated with that tradition—a certain unswerving, progressive logic, religious awe, grandeur, sublimity, nobility in suffering. But Mahler's evocation of this voice is neither direct quotation nor unconscious modeling; through subtle deformations it signals not only distance, but also regret: it invokes these qualities as anterior, belonging to a classical age now problematic to the point of unsustainability.

This distancing is a key device by which Mahler's "Adagio voice" attains its particular expressive quality—of something recalled because already lost. Theodor Schmitt, discussing the Finale of the Third, suggests that Mahler's music is distanced from its models by the high degree of differentiation between its constituent voices:

In the broad spatiality of their ductus, in their will-of-the-wisp emergence and then disappearance, and finally in their accidental expressiveness, the voices here suggest a many-voicedness and animation, a spatial breadth and individuality of movement which is comparable neither with the voice-leading of a Bach Chorale nor a Beethovenian Hymn, nor dependent on a Bruckner choral movement. Every voice here claims its own movement space, an individually appearing ductus, indeed, its own character.<sup>53</sup>

It is not that the Finale of the Third Symphony suggests parody or deliberate distortion; the music would seem to propose itself as utterly authentic, heartfelt, and sincere (*Innig*). But there are moments of exaggeration that tug in the opposite direction. The doubling of a lyrical melody at the octave (as at Fig. 14.9, in the countermelody of violins and cellos) is rare in Mahler and introduces a tone reminiscent of Tchaikovsky at this point. The proximity of religious and erotic passion evokes the theatrically religious music not only of Verdi, but also of Berlioz and Liszt (e.g., Fig. 7).

Mahler's use of an Adagio for the Finale of the Third Symphony was not repeated until the Ninth. This displacement from the conventional position as an inner movement was unprecedented in symphonic literature, but for the example of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony (*Pathétique*), composed more or less at the same time as Mahler's Third. This makes a very different proposition, since the "Adagio voice" here becomes the goal of the end-orientated symphony rather than a modality passed through earlier in the work. In the case of Mahler's Ninth this effect is reinforced because of the lyrical Andante that forms the first subject material of the first movement, thus displacing the expectation of allegro movements at both ends of the symphony. It is the Ninth, and above all its concluding Adagio, that foregrounds the question of an authentic voice most unequivocally. It is here, one might say, that the possibility of an authentic voice is either proven or abandoned.

The requirements of the end-oriented symphony are not evaded here, but intensified. The Adagio of the Ninth makes explicit that what is at stake in the symphony is nothing less than the authenticity of an expressive musical voice and, thus, of

the subject for which it speaks. Such a responsibility is already framed by the symphony's inner movements, here characterized by a disorientating juxtaposition of self-consciously contrived, artificial voices brought in from outside the boundaries of normal symphonic discourse. Toward the end of the Rondo Burlesque, the impossible attempt to integrate such disparate voices is finally given up, in a series of gestures that address the question of musical voice in an unequivocal and self-conscious manner. Several times in quick succession, the violent contrapuntal drive of the movement is halted in its tracks to give way to quiet, lyrical anticipations of the turn figure that will be so prominent in the finale. These moments, marked *Mit grosser Empfindung*, are characterized by a complete change of texture, sonority, and pace and are signaled by upward glissandi (in the violins or harp) that quite literally tear up the preceding page in order to start again with this quite other musical voice (e.g., mm. 347–522). The link to the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth is underlined by the Rondo Burlesque, which functions like the *Schreckensfanfare* (as Wagner called it) that prepares Beethoven's Finale. It frames a series of fragmentary sections in which possible musical voices are tried out only to be rejected as inadequate. Both Mahler and Beethoven thus foreground the question of voice and thematize the notion of inadequacy or inauthenticity as a foil to presenting a quite different voice as the thus far elusively authentic one. In Beethoven, this is the lyrical D major melody that is to become the Ode to Joy; in Mahler, it is the intensely lyrical adagio in D flat major, a semitone lower than the D major of the wistfully lyrical first movement. Arguably, in his Ninth, Mahler thus engages more profoundly with the "problem" of Beethoven's Ninth than he had done in the early symphonies. Whereas, in the first four symphonies, Mahler had forged statements of collective affirmation apparently in keeping with Beethoven, in the Ninth the self-conscious, self-reflective critique of the musical voice persists right through to the closing bars. It is perhaps this self-questioning of musical voice, rather than any more surface features, that defines the essential modernity of Mahler's late works.

The Finale draws on all of the markers of the "Adagio voice" as that of an authentic subjectivity (Ex. 8.2). The opening figure in the violins elaborates a familiar cadential gesture of vocal music: the turn figure propels the solo voice upward in order to descend again to the return of the melody and accompaniment texture. It is found in countless vocal and instrumental compositions marking the end of a cadenza or simple extension of the solo voice prior to the repeat of the main melodic material (as in the return to the A section of a simple ternary form). In this way, the Finale opens in *medias res*, as if it were returning to its Adagio material after the excursions of the earlier movements. At the same time it underlines its essentially vocal, even aria-like character. If the opening violin line stands in for an absent vocalist, it also denotes a very particular kind of singing voice. The intensity of tone here is achieved by the *sul G* marking, the use of 1st and 2nd violins in unison, the reminder to use a full bow and the relatively low tessitura. The style of delivery is shaped by a particularly exaggerated use of accents: both the turn figure in m. 1 and

**Example 8.2** Ninth Symphony, fourth movement, mm. 1–11

**Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend** **a tempo (Molto adagio)**

Violin I G-Saite grosser Ton

Violin II G-Saite f lang gezogen dim. p molto espress.

Viola f lang gezogen p molto espress.

Violoncello p molto espress.

Violoncello p molto espress.

Double Bass p molto espress.

4 stets grosser Ton

Vln. I V

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vc.

Dh

(continued)

**Example 8.2** *Continued*

7

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vc.

Db.

DropBooks

9

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Vc.

Db.

*p subito*

the linear descent in m. 2 would more normally be given legato in the vocal model to which they refer. The model is of course further deformed through the exaggeratedly slow tempo. The combination of all these elements draws unequivocally on a sign of subjective melos but, at the same time, stretches that material close to breaking point through overexaggeration: a vocalist, delivering the turn figure in this way in a da capo aria would introduce a disturbing element of irony into such a normally mellifluous device.

The stretching out of what is effectively an anacrusis into m. 3 has a number of other important effects. It holds up the onset of any regular meter, so that the opening bars are heard *senza misura*, creating, as in a cadenza, a space for the elaboration of an individual voice prior to its being reabsorbed into a collective one. That moment of reabsorption (m. 3) is thus marked by several parameters: the slow regularity of the 4/4 meter, the hymnlike melody of the upper part, the full texture of orchestral strings and a concomitant shift to a gentler tone color, reinforced by the new *piano* dynamic. It is a gesture with a very distinct lineage: the Adagio of Bruckner's Ninth and the opening of Mahler's Tenth present examples that are constructed in exactly the same manner.<sup>54</sup> In all three cases, the solo line functions as a long-range anacrusis and is absorbed into a rich, hymnlike collective. But the sense of resolution is short-lived. The opening chords of m. 3 suggest, through their rich sonority and balanced deployment of diatonic triads, a sense of repose: one might assume the same purposeful progression of line toward closure that is promised by the Adagio finale of the Third Symphony. But the propulsive logic, given here by contrapuntal voice-leading, is undermined by chromatic sidestep and disjunction. The keynote on the third beat of m. 3 is thus harmonized by a substitute chord, effectively creating an interrupted progression from V<sup>7</sup> to VI-flat—a harmonic twist that pervades all four movements. Measures 3–10, taken together, are presented as a classical eight-bar melodic unit, as amenable to the same subdivisions into two- and four-measure units as any classical lyrical adagio opening. But, at the same time, this formal unit threatens to burst apart at the seams: the continual sidestepping of the harmony, the false relations introduced by the turn figure and disjunct voice-leading are at odds with the formal composure implied by the melodic material and its phrase structure.

It serves, perhaps, as a good illustration of Adorno's comment on Mahler's voice: "What is new is his tone. He charges tonality with an expression that it is no longer constituted to bear. Overstretched, its voice cracks.... The forced tone itself becomes expressive."<sup>55</sup> The opening of the Finale to the Ninth is not a standard example of Mahler's use of borrowed voices; neither is it likely to be cited as an example of musical irony. And yet, it is both borrowed and ironic: borrowed because it is at pains to stress its provenance in the tradition of instrumental Adagio movements; ironic, in the sense that, like Hoffmann's Kapellmeister Kreisler, it insists on the impossibility of giving voice to what it nevertheless attempts to voice: the exaggerated turns (too slow, too heavily accented), the thickly cloying tone, the harmonic sidesteps, all add up to a critical undermining from within of the



most hallowed voice of musical self-disclosure, the expressive, lyrical outpouring of the arioso Adagio. The proposition of Mahler's "Adagio voice" is thus complex and uncomfortably inconclusive. While proposing itself as the voice of a genuine, authentic subjectivity it simultaneously critiques its own claim. This is no mere play of musical artifice, nor is it a pessimistic abdication of musical expression. Rather than testing the limits of musical language merely to show its essential artificiality, the Adagio of Mahler's Ninth, in revealing its own artificiality, makes space for something that might lie outside of artifice.

### "As If"

The case is posited but, at the same time, its impossibility is frankly stated. This impossible case is, however, in a conditional sentence of this sort, assumed or posited for the moment as possible or real.

—Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As If"* (1911)

The category of "as if" might be taken as fundamental to all art.<sup>56</sup> Not all art, however, draws attention to its basic condition. It is no coincidence that many of Mahler's favorite authors are associated with just such a strategy—Cervantes, Shakespeare, Sterne, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Jean Paul—because it is one that defines his own work also. The suspension of disbelief required by plays, novels, and operas is, in the case of symphonic music, transformed to a sense of "what if?" "What if this were the case?" an instrumental work proposes with its opening statement. "If this were the case, then might not this also be the case and yet this at the same time? But what of this? How should this be possible, too, in just such a way?" The idea of a classical, autonomous instrumental music is founded on such a rhetoric of conditional logic, inflected with all the associative richness of musical tone. This quasi-philosophical process, an unfolding of purely musical propositions, a kind of philosophical excursus through the particularity of motif and rhythm and tone rather than abstract concepts, set out so compellingly in the late eighteenth century, is Mahler's inheritance. So, too, is the self-consciousness of such a procedure as explored by Beethoven.

Mahler's fondness for the poetry of Eichendorff undoubtedly had to do with its recurrent proposition of things "as if" they were the case; this poetry speaks frequently in a subjunctive or conditional mode, as Mahler's music does too. Eichendorff's transformation of empirical particularity into a luminous symbol for the nonempirical is embedded in every one of his metaphors: "It was as if heaven / had softly kissed the earth" ("Es war, als hätt' der Himmel / Die Erde still geküßt") are the opening lines of "Mondnacht," set by Schumann with the same air of unreality

implied by Eichendorff's definitive "as if." But this quality denotes far more than mere metaphor; it has to do with proposing a state of affairs that might be, or could be, the case. Two lines from "Schöne Fremde" go to the heart of several passages in Mahler's music: "And the distance speaks with ecstasy / As if of some great happiness to come" ("Es redet trunken die Ferne / Wie von künftigem, großen Glück"). One might relate this without difficulty to passages from the Andantes of the Fourth or Sixth Symphonies or the moments of *Durchbruch* in the first movement of the Seventh and the second movement of the Fifth Symphonies.

Eichendorff anticipates Mahler in his self-confession that the artist necessarily tells lies in order to tell a truth, that art speaks "as though" something were the case that is, empirically, not the case. The poet's confession is, at the same time, a lament for the artist whose artifice and expressive deception compels him to a kind of loneliness. A verse from Eichendorff's "Wehmut" (set by Schumann) defines the voice Mahler later deployed in the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and the *Kindertotenlieder*.

*Ich kann wohl manchmal singen  
Als ob ich fröhlich sei;  
Doch Heimlich Tränen dringen,  
Da wird das Herz mir frei.*



It is true—I can sing at times  
As though I were happy:  
But secretly tears well up  
To relieve my heavy heart.

Alma draws our attention to this aspect of Mahler's music from a different, more personal direction. "He was childlike," she remarks simply in her diary, underlining a quality that made him far from easy to live with.<sup>57</sup> But it also reminds us of a quality of the man and the music that is too easily lost sight of, obscured by the intensity and complexity of the music and the weight of scholarly and critical discourse that surrounds it. As in the music of Mozart or Schumann, the play of wit, deliberate simplicity, make-believe, and mercurial fantasy suggests something of the childlike character of the composer. It reminds us, too, that this childlike capacity for make-believe, for infinitely inventive characters, for the journeys of the imagination and their wide-eyed retelling, are all essential attributes of the creative artist. In Mahler's own time, this aspect of his music often provoked incomprehension and resentment: his simplicity was read as parody, banality, or sentimentality. In the context of the symphony, a genre predicated on grand claims of aesthetic autonomy and metaphysical purpose, the childlike visions carried by his music were apt to be heard as a deliberate naïveté—inauthentic, empty, and hostile to the very musical tradition in which Mahler worked.

This aspect of his music remains problematic today, partly because contemporary audiences too easily miss the dissonance between such simplicity and the high claims of the symphonic genre, a stylistic tension that was all too obvious to his contemporaries. But it is problematic also because, *pace* Adorno and others who see Mahler's music as mounting a negative critique, it has the "embarrassing" tendency to sound out affirmations with a force and insistence like almost no other music.<sup>58</sup> Theodor Schmitt underlines this paradox of Mahler's music, suggesting that it displays a utopian longing for "a second musical innocence" as the counterweight to an "over-artificial" era to which it also gives expression. The tension between these instincts, he suggests, produces a deeply stylized musical technique that, in the end, constitutes "a negation of his compositional claims." "That which sounds not-artificial and simple in Mahler's work appears as the correlate to the artificial, pathetic, even theatrical elements of his music. The pathetic overcoming of expression and technique seek—equally pathetically—their negation."<sup>59</sup>

If we accept that Mahler's music demonstrates a remarkable quality of self-critique, an awareness of the limits of its own language, an acknowledgment of its own boundaries even as it attempts to cross them, we also have to make room for the most basic instinct of all artworks, that they proceed "as if." The actor conducts himself as if he were the character he portrays, and the audience invests in this fiction while knowing it to be just that (which is why we weep when Juliet dies but do not jump up onstage to prevent a suicide). Mahler's fascination with early romantic music and literature reflects his own intense cultivation of imagination and fantasy held in balance with a self-awareness of the distance between mundanity and the world of the imagination. The romantics embraced not just the dramatic fantasy of Shakespeare, but also the high degree of ironic self-consciousness in his work; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was emblematic in reflecting on the artificial nature of art's illusion while nevertheless continuing to believe in it, just as we, the audience, might reflect on this while nevertheless continuing to be entranced by it.

"Scarcely a theme, let alone a whole movement, can be taken at face value. A masterpiece like the Fourth Symphony has a hypothetical air about it from the first note to the last."<sup>60</sup> What Adorno brings out, in his centenary address, is a music that is no longer at home in its own idiom and one that builds, in part, by reflecting on the inadequacy of its own language. Adorno's idea is taken up by Hermann Danuser in his suggestion that Mahler's music does not speak as if it wants to deny or destroy the idea of a symphonic music: "On the contrary, it speaks—for example in the Finale of the Third Symphony—as if [*als ob*] it still believed in the possibility of an unbroken art music."<sup>61</sup> Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht made use of the same phrase in reference to Mahler's treatment of that touchstone of the nineteenth-century symphony, the affirmative ending. Mahler's triumphant endings, he suggests, are not really successful overcomings but done, self-consciously, "as if" they were. Such noisy conclusions, forged entirely within a traditional orchestral tone, present "a fortissimo demeanor, that is possible only by the forgetting or displacing of the

musical 'Other'—as though it had never been.”<sup>62</sup> The same idea has been taken up more recently by Federico Celestini, who suggests that the triumphant ending of the Third Symphony is undermined by the “scurrility” of the earlier scherzo. Mahler, he argues, lags behind Berlioz in this respect because the *Symphonie Fantastique* had already parodied the idea of a triumphant ending. With reference to the Third Symphony, he concludes: “After the Dionysian destruction of symphonic beauty in the ‘Tierstück’—but also after the stylistic and formal exceedings of the ‘Bacchuszug’ in the first movement—the *Parsifal* reference of the solemn, redemption-apotheosis in the Finale sounds unbelievable as a ‘deus ex machina.’ Mahler stands to be reproached as Wagner had been already by Nietzsche: for being theatrical.”<sup>63</sup>

Once this quality of “as if” has been foregrounded, as it is by the fairy-tale tone of the Fourth Symphony, the triumphant and affirmative endings of Mahler’s symphonies may acquire an air of the hypothetical; the finales to the Third, Fifth, and Seventh symphonies have a tendency to strain the expressive capacity of the brass chorale, and even the ending of the First Symphony acknowledges that mere force is not adequately convincing, hence the theatrical requirement that the entire horn section stand up for the final few minutes of the piece. The whole of the Eighth Symphony is prone to this, nowhere more so than its closing bars, which highlight a tendency heard also in the finales of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh symphonies: that the monumental and affirmative, once sounded, is then drained of its momentary energy and fades away into the distance. Once we approach Mahler’s music as a case of “as if,” the affirmations begin to sound with a rather different tone. The end of the Second Symphony, for example, begins to sound less like a *statement* of unquestionable faith in resurrection and more like a *performance* of the idea of resurrection, “as if” it were true. And closer scrutiny reveals a fissure in Mahler’s Finale that suggests just such a reading, located in the gap between his setting of Klopstock’s text (tending toward affirmative unison statements in E flat major) and the setting of his own interpolated lines, beginning “O glaube,” which express self-doubt and self-admonition to believe in the face of doubt. The urgent, subjective tone of Mahler’s text contrasts with the biblical sobriety of Klopstock’s. The familiarity of this opposition, of passionate doubt and triumphant affirmation, should not blind us to the fracture in Mahler’s musical language that it designates. The anxiety expressed in Mahler’s setting of “O glaube” is not restricted to questioning the ability to affirm a particular religious belief (the idea of resurrection), but it expands to interrogate the capacity of the music to affirm anything at all. It does so because the musical setting is at odds with the imperative tone of the text. Compared to the calm affirmation of the chorale music to which Mahler sets Klopstock’s promise “You *will* arise,” the musical voice that carries Mahler’s own text is that of the doubting believer, the *would-be* believer (“Believe, oh my heart, believe”) and thus acts as a kind of impassioned urging to oneself.

James L. Zychowicz, discussing the problematic Finale of the Seventh Symphony, takes up Adorno’s comment that Mahler was “a poor yea-sayer,” suggesting a gap in

this movement between apparent intention and effect.<sup>64</sup> Martin Scherzinger's analysis of this movement bears out Eggebrecht's comment about Mahler's affirmative endings; he suggests that "its ability to disconcert the critic lies less in the (outdated) invocation of a continuous tradition alone than in the deeply ambiguous way in which this diatonicism is harnessed in the service of discontinuity and is made to challenge rather than support that tradition."<sup>65</sup> As an example he cites "the conventional (even archaic) triadic fanfare-melodies of the ritornello, as well as the persistent formality and conventionality of the cadencing," devices he suggests imply a deliberate and self-conscious historicism, an exaggeration of the historical model that thereby creates a distance from the tradition that it references. Scherzinger's deconstructive reading concludes, invoking the terminology of Derrida, that "Mahler's Rondo-Finale reveals itself as less *grammatical* than *grammatological*," exposing formal devices for their "inadequacy" and thus forcing the listener to a consciously interpretative activity.<sup>66</sup>

Such an idea is implied in the Adornian category of the breakthrough, which James Buhler describes as "a technique for breaking-open the hermetically sealed world of a musical artwork to expose the contingencies and the arbitrariness of its binding forces."<sup>67</sup> It is, in his definition, akin to the disjunctive effects of romantic irony in that it attempts "to realize within the bounds of artistic illusion what the very artistic illusion attempts to suppress: the idea that the work might have proceeded otherwise than it did."<sup>68</sup> This is a recurrent strategy of Mahler's work and one of its most disconcerting effects, but it would be a gross distortion of his music to suggest that Mahler's principal achievement was to reveal the contingency of its own expressive materials or symphonic forms. Mahler mixes highly original and individuated materials with highly derivative and generic ones. His music is often contingent—it might have been otherwise—but also often opposes itself passionately to such an idea, as is suggested by its projection of a quality of "enduring," or "persisting," achieved by variant returns of the same musical idea, as in the Finale of the Ninth. In Adornian language, Mahler makes use of contingent material (common military topics, for example) to project a sense of the noncontingent (the tragedy of the drummer boy in "Der Tamboursg'ssell").

Mahler thus exacerbates a problem at the heart of romantic music. On the one hand, it exposes the limits of representation through a self-critique of its own language. On the other hand, it makes the essentially metaphysical proposition that what lies beyond the limits of representation might yet still be imaged or even momentarily realized within the work. In other words, Mahler takes on the idea of aesthetic play and illusion, its constituent quality of "as if," in order to invert the normal order of things. The mundane and real, drawn into Mahler's work through a host of particular references and topical allusions, become material for a musical critique of representation; the aesthetic projection of its other, conversely, is framed by a musical tone and gesture that confers an intense physical presence through its (albeit ephemeral) realization in sound. This is what binds Mahler to both the

romantic and the modern and the modern to the postmodern—its simultaneous presentation of the limits of representation and its fictional (aesthetic, performative, “as if”) enactment of a content that should, strictly speaking, not be possible. It is no accident that Mahler concentrated his creative effort on symphonic composition; his work was a self-conscious but impossible project to reconfigure Beethoven’s affirmation of the transcendent logic of Idealism. In the necessary but expressive failure of that project Mahler’s music might, retrospectively, help to draw out the palpably self-critical aspect of Beethoven’s own music.

Mahler’s musical voice is strained because it is caught in the tension between expression and construction, between a romantic aesthetic of representation and a modernist awareness of the gap between signifiers and signifieds.<sup>69</sup> Mahler was a romantic who, in spite of himself, wrestled with the loss of innocence that comes with such awareness. His music thus acknowledges its own constructive and conventional elements while at the same time opposing this by a recurrent reaffirmation of the idea of expression. At times, the effect is humorous or ironic, in a playful sense; at others, it urges the listener to believe even while acknowledging that its terms should no longer be believable. The central category of all art—its illusory “as if”—is thus brought to a heightened state of self-reflection in Mahler’s music. On the one hand, it undermines its own propositions with a constant self-awareness of the constructive, artificial element in all proposing; on the other hand, it has a theatrical capacity (even while acknowledging its own theatricality) to make present, to embody, to realize. It proposes a utopian content while at the same time acknowledging that all such propositions negate themselves. Mahler’s music thus intensifies its own fractures: it cultivates the edge of its own language, forcing it to say what it should no longer be able to say. In highlighting its own capacity for failure, the work nevertheless keeps alive the reality of a will to express and the subject that wills it.

In a letter to Alma, of June 1909, Mahler attempted to explain his understanding of the end of Goethe’s *Faust*. He draws heavily on the idea of allegory as a necessary strategy for dealing with an essentially inexpressible content, suggesting that the whole of *Faust* should be understood in this way. His account of Goethe’s play might have been written about one of his own symphonies.

All transitory things (i.e. everything I have shown you in these two plays)—are allegories. These, by the very nature of their worldliness, are inadequate—but when freed from their outer shell of human frailty, they are accomplished, and there is no further need for circumlocution, comparison—or allegory. For all I here have attempted to express, which is in fact inexpressible, is accomplished. What then have I been attempting to express? I can outline it only in the form of a further allegory: Eternal Femininity has carried us forward. We have arrived, we are at rest, we are in possession of that which on earth we could only desire or strive for.<sup>70</sup>

In the end, Mahler's imperatives—like those of all art—are really subjunctives delivered in an urgent tone. In the face of ironic and deconstructive tensions woven through his musical language, often in spite of himself, Mahler's music retorts in a tone of passionate avowal: "What if it *were* the case, my friends?" It offends against its own critique of representation and delivers up—albeit momentarily—a realization of musical fulfillment "as if" it were indeed the case.

This is the constitutive tension of Mahler's music: its proposition of expressive intensity, and the expressive subject which it implies, are repeatedly undermined, brought into question, made problematic, opposed and even parodied. In Mahler, the expressive gesture goes hand in hand with a kind of deconstructive twist that brings into question the authenticity of that gesture, exposing its elements as so many linguistic conventions: historical, borrowed, constructed, inadequate, and inauthentic. This peculiar tension, at the heart of Mahler's music, links him to the quite different ironic voices of Stravinsky and Schumann, from which he is nevertheless clearly distinguished. What distinguishes him above all is the intensity with which acts of expression continue in the face of their own deconstruction. Mahler's music shares with the irony of early romanticism and the irony of modernism a radical self-critique of its own musical language and all its inherited expressive rhetoric. But in reflecting on its own expressive language it denies neither the idea of expression nor the idea of subjectivity implied by expression. Mahler's music is not, in the end, postmodern; it does not defer to the conventionality of language. It comes closer to an essentially existential conundrum, worthy of Samuel Beckett, to attempt to speak while knowing the inadequacy of speech. This, rather than any soft-focus view of Mahler as romantic, accounts for our continuing fascination.

# Notes

## Chapter 1: Mahler and the Musical Voice

Epigraph quotation from Roland Barthes, “Music, Voice, Language,” in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trs. R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 279.

1. Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 61.

2. Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 1.

3. “My two symphonies contain the inner aspect of my whole life; I have written into them everything that I have experienced and endured—Truth and Poetry in music. To understand these works properly would be to see my life transparently revealed in them.” Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 30. Richard Specht read the first movement of the Third Symphony as autobiographical, specifically as an account of the vicissitudes of the artist-creator; Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler* (Berlin: Gose & Tetzlaff, 1905), 38–39, cited by Vera Micznik, “‘Ways of Telling’ in Mahler’s Music: The Third Symphony as Narrative Text,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 295–323, 299–300.

4. Letter to Annie Mincieux, May 1896; in *Mahler’s Unknown Letters*, ed. Herta Blaukopf (London: Gollancz, 1986), 122. Blaukopf notes that the title “Trilogie der Leidenschaft” refers to three poems by Goethe that deal with his love for a young girl, describing his proposal, rejection, and parting.

5. “Even his instrumental music betrays its origin in songlike conceptions, which give his symphonic works an almost linguistic quality.” Kurt Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. Inge Goodwin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 109.

6. Several authors have underlined that Mahler was insistent that his *Rückert Lieder* should preferably be performed in smaller concert halls. See Stephen E. Hefling, “The Rückert Lieder,” in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 338–365.

7. For example, the bustling accompaniment figures and quasi-improvised woodwind lines in “Blicke mir” or a slower version of the same thing in “Der Einsame im Herbst” from *Das Lied von der Erde*.

8. “Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt!” It was the passage beginning with these words (*Andante maestoso*, mm. 595ff.) that Mahler arranged for six trombones for the opening of the Beethoven exhibition at the Secession building in 1902.



9. This marking appears in m. 11 of “Nun will die Sonn’ so hell aufgeh’n,” the first of the *Kindertotenlieder*.

10. The Beethoven Prize was awarded by the Vienna Society of the Friends of Music. It was won in 1881 by Robert Fuchs, one of Mahler’s former teachers at the Conservatoire. The judges were Johannes Brahms, Hans Richter, Karl Goldmark, Joseph Hellmesberger and J. N. Fuchs (the brother of the winner). By the time Mahler conducted the premiere in 1901 he had for over three years been director of the Vienna Hofoper, where he had displaced Richter and was in a position to program, or not, the operas of Karl Goldmark.

11. Mahler draws on at least two sources here, a story by the Brothers Grimm and one by Ludwig Bechstein. A third possible source is a play with this title by Martin Greif performed in 1876 at the Conservatoire in Vienna.

12. “The epic presents the *event* which develops out of the *past*, the drama the *action* which extends to the *future*, the lyric the *feeling* which is enclosed within the *present*.” Jean Paul Richter, *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), vol. 5 of *Werke* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1963), trs. Margaret R. Hale as *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter’s School for Aesthetics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 196.

13. The “Spielmann” himself speaks at one point (“Was soll dem Euch mein Singen!”), but Mahler allots this line to three soloists (soprano, alto, and tenor) singing in unison to make a strangely composite voice.

14. Susanne Vill, *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalischer Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1979), 28. Mahler revised *Das klagende Lied* on two occasions (1892–1893 and 1898–1899), the most substantial result of which was the excision of Part 1, *Waldmärchen*, leaving a work consisting of only two parts, *Der Spielmann* and *Hochzeitstück*. One reason for this may have been the redundancy of the first part, which narrates the entire tale before enacting it again in the second and third parts. Both remaining parts are structured around the climactic entry of the flute’s voice, a tension that had been lacking in the first part.

15. Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 75–76. Carolyn Abbate underlines the importance of this figure in *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13.

16. It is perhaps not irrelevant that the repressed voice in *Das klagende Lied* is that of a young man. In both versions of the tale on which Mahler drew it is clearly a child that is murdered; in Bechstein’s version, a brother murders his sister. Some commentators have suggested that the work is connected to Mahler’s experience, and attendant feelings of guilt, of the premature death of his brother Ernst, aged only fourteen, in 1875. The link with Mahler’s brother and the subject of repression is explored by Jack Diether, “Notes on Some Mahler Juvenalia,” *Chord and Discord* 3/1 (1969), 3–100, and repudiated by Dika Newlin in “The ‘Mahler’s Brother Syndrome’: Necropsychiatry and the Artist,” *Musical Quarterly* 66 (1980): 296–304.

17. The musician’s theme here has some similarity to the “mit Parodie” section in the third movement of the First Symphony, often associated with itinerant Bohemian musicians.

18. The voice may protest against bereavement (as in *Kindertotenlieder*), the numbness of a broken heart (as in *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*), or the alienating collective authority of the march (as in the first movement of the Sixth Symphony or the final song of *Das Lied von der Erde*).

19. Jens Malte Fischer runs the two titles together as “Das klagende Lied von der Erde” in a chapter heading of his book *Jahrhundertdämmerung: Ansichten eines anderen Fin de siècle* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2000).

20. Arthur Wenk, “The Composer as Poet in *Das Lied von der Erde*,” *19th-Century Music* 1/1 (1977): 33–47, 41.

21. Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, x and 12.

22. Peter Franklin, “Mahler,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:615–616.

23. Lawrence Kramer, “‘As if a voice were in them’: Music, Narrative, and Deconstruction,” in *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 176–213, 202.

24. Peter Franklin has observed that the orchestral *Wunderhorn* songs “extend the boundaries of the orchestral Lied, almost creating a specific genre of allegorical songs exploring contrasting ‘voices’ in an evolving, quasi-symphonic discourse (particularly where male and female characters engage in dialogue, as in *Der Schildwache Nachtlied*.” “Mahler,” 15:619.

25. Constantin Floros points out that, in the manuscript score, Mahler attached a motto to the Finale of the Third Symphony: “Vater, sieh an die Wunden mein! / Kein Wesen laß verloren sein!” Floros suggests that this is a free rendering of the *Wunderhorn* poem “Erlösung” (*Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, 3:131). *Gustav Mahler I: Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematischer Darstellung*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), 127–128. Webern set the same poem as the second of his *Drei Lieder*, Op. 18.

26. See Part 2 of the Eighth Symphony, at Fig. 176.

27. Floros argues that Mahler’s symphonies are possessed of “Liedhaftigkeit” (songlikeness) in their instrumental imitations of vocal forms, including recitative, aria, chorale, hymn, and song. *Gustav Mahler II: Mahler und die Symphonik des 19. Jahrhunderts in neuer Deutung* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), 131. For further discussion see Michael Oltmanns, *Strophische Strukturen im Werk Gustav Mahlers* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1987).

28. Raymond Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler’s Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 121.

29. Adorno, *Mahler*, 22.

30. Monika Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Emil Katznbichler, 1971), 15.

31. *Ibid.*, 16.

32. Mahler’s premiere of the First Symphony as a symphony, rather than a tone poem, in Berlin in 1896 had it paired in the same program with the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*.

33. See Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers*; Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (London: Faber, 1975); Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*.

34. “Ein störendes Mißverhältnis zwischen der Intimität des Inhalts und der Stärke der in Anspruch genommenen klanglichen Mittel”; quoted in Hermann Danuser, “Gustav Mahlers Symphonie ‘Das Lied von der Erde’ als Problem der Gattungsgeschichte,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 40/4 (1983): 276–286, 279.

35. “Lied und Monumentaltrieb streben in Mahler zueinander”; cited in Theodor Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983), 13. See also Paul Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921), 23.

36. See Oltmanns, *Strophische Strukturen im Werk Gustav Mahlers*, 206.

37. Stephen E. Hefling, “Das Lied von der Erde: Mahler’s Symphony for Voices and Orchestra—or Piano,” *Journal of Musicology* 10/3 (1992): 293–340, 293 and 295.

38. Danuser, “Gustav Mahlers Symphonie ‘Das Lied von der Erde,’” 277. See also *Gustav Mahler: Das Lied von der Erde* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1986).

39. See Julian Johnson, “The Status of the Subject in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 18/2 (1994): 108–120.

40. Kurt von Fischer, “Bemerkungen zu Gustav Mahlers Liedern,” in *Gustav Mahler*, ed. Hermann Danuser, *Wege der Forschung*, Band 653 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 69–81, 79.

41. The profound influence of this work on the nineteenth-century symphony has been the object of several studies. See Mark Evan Bonds, *After Beethoven: Imperatives of Originality in the Symphony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); D. Kern Holoman, ed., *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony* (New York: Schirmer, 1997); Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trs. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

42. Peter Franklin describes the Second and Third Symphonies as “post-Beethovenian choral symphonies” in *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 37. Elsewhere Franklin says that “the Second and Third symphonies advertise their status as heirs to another source work of musical Romanticism in Germany: Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, as interpreted by Wagner in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*.” See “Mahler,” 617.

43. According to Alfred Berliner and Alma Mahler. See Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 61. Later Floros underlines again the importance of this essay and points to similarities in phrasing between Mahler’s formulations and Wagner’s. *Ibid.*, 160.

44. See Knud Martner, ed., *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler* (London: Faber, 1979), 434, n. 286: “In fact, it was Mahler who opened the exhibition, conducting a chorus from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony which he had arranged for six trombones.” Franz Willnauer corroborates this, underlining that the trombones were placed on the first floor of the *Secessionhaus* and that the arrangement was of the passage that sets the words “Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt? / Such ihn üben Stenenzelt / Über Sternen muß er wohnen.” *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper* (Vienna: Löcker, 1993), 115.

45. Richard Wagner, *Beethoven* (1870), trs. Roger Allen (unpublished MS).

46. Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Music and Words”; repr. in Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, 113.

47. Leo Treitler, “History, Criticism, and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 3/3 (1980): 193–210, 196.

48. Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (London: Faber, 1971), 440.

49. Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler*; repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 41.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Christian Wildhagen, *Die Achte Symphonie von Gustav Mahler: Konzeption einer universalen Symphonik* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 143.

52. Floros, *Gustav Mahler II*, 107–181.

53. According to Richard Specht, Mahler’s own words about the Eighth Symphony were taken down by a stenographer in the summer of 1906. “Zu Mahlers Achter Symphonie,” *Tagespost*, June 14, 1914, morning edition, 9.

54. Letter to Georg Göhler, cited in Kurt Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler: A Documentary Study* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 271.

55. Kurt von Fischer notes of the *Kindertotenlieder*, “Die Singstimme ist in gewissem Sinne entsubjektiviert; sie verhält sich wie ein Instrument, so daß auch jederzeit Stimme und Instrument austauschbar sind: instrumentale und vokale Motive gehorchen denselben Prinzipien.” “Bemerkungen zu Gustav Mahlers Liedern,” in Danuser, *Gustav Mahler*, 69–81, 78; Kofi Agawu cites the opening of the *Kindertotenlieder* as “emblematic of a new linearity in Mahler, a contrapuntal orientation that left its most distinctive traces on his late works.” “Prolonged counterpoint in Mahler,” in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 217.

56. Adorno is cited by Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 71.

57. James L. Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15–16.

58. The epitome of this process might be the analytical orchestration by Webern of Bach's *Ricercare*, which fragments each line into its smallest constituent motivic units.

59. Neville Cardus, *Gustav Mahler: His Mind and His Music*, vol. 1 (London: Gollancz, 1972), 31.

60. The solo clarinet opening to Sibelius's First Symphony (1899) may perhaps be taken as a precedent.

61. Discussing the horn episodes in the Scherzo of the Fifth Symphony, Monika Tibbe underlines that the articulation of the horn lines recalls the expression of declamation; nearly every tone of the melody has an accent or portamento mark, as if each tone set a syllable of an imaginary text. *Über die Verwendlung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers*, 98.

62. Reinforcing chordal harmony by sustained notes in the trombones, as Mahler does here, is a favorite device for enriching this tone further.

63. In the middle symphonies the exaggeration of melodic lines to distort them beyond a vocal contour is particularly noticeable. Examples can be seen in the first movement of the Sixth [e.g., Fig. 31] or the third movement of the Seventh [e.g., Fig. 127.4].

64. See David Pickett, “Mahler on Record: The Spirit or the Letter?” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 345–377, 346. See also Paul Banks, “Aspects of Mahler's Fifth Symphony: Performance Practice and Interpretation,” *Musical Times* 130 (May 1989): 258–265, 258–259. Kurt Blaukopf noted, in 1973, that the explosion of interest in Mahler's music coincided with the development of stereo recording. *Gustav Mahler*, 248.

65. Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1994), 176.

66. This evidence is presented in Gilbert Kaplan, “Adagietto: ‘From Mahler with Love,’” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 379–400.

67. “The feeling persists that Mahler's ascent towards the inexpressible belongs as much with Puccini and Massenet as with Goethe.” John Williamson, “The Eighth Symphony,” in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 417.

68. Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 151.

69. Theodor Schmitt, discussing the second movement of the Third Symphony, talked of “etwa die Haltung eines Sängers, der sich (ähnlich etwa Wagners Wolfram von

Eschenbach) auf der Leite begleitet und ein ‘Ständchen,’ ein ‘Interludium’ gibt.” *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers*, 26.

70. See Robert G. Hopkins, *Closure and Mahler’s Music: The Role of Secondary Parameters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

71. See Tibbe, *Über die Verwendlung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers*, 66–67.

72. *Ibid.*, 62.

73. “Dem Auflösungsprozeß des Satzes steht der Charakter der Coda entgegen, ohne daß sie jenen aufheben könnte. Eher straft umgekehrt die Satzentwicklung die triumphierende Coda Lügen. Es sei dann, sie wäre Triumph der Zerstörung.” *Ibid.*, 65.

74. The height of this tendency is reached in Part 1 of the Eighth Symphony. The countertheme at Fig. 1.2, for example, is given to four flutes, four oboes, and four clarinets in unison. The eight horns are used several times in unison [e.g., Figs. 52, 55, 79, and 89].

75. Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 34.

76. When Mahler did get the opportunity to hear his works in performance, he often made subsequent changes to orchestration, usually to lighten the texture. The alterations to the First Symphony after its premiere can be read against the manuscript score used for that performance housed at the University of Western Ontario. See Stephen McClatchie, “The 1889 Version of Mahler’s First Symphony: A New Manuscript Source,” *19th-Century Music*, 20/2 (1996): 99–124.

77. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 160.

78. Speaking of the tone of the first movement of the Seventh Symphony, Mahler is reported, by Richard Specht, as saying “Hier röhrt die Natur.” *Gustav Mahler* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1913), 299. The verb Specht uses describes the sound of a barking stag.

79. Guido Adler insisted that Mahler’s approach to orchestration was unlike that of Berlioz because “he never considered sonority an end in itself and used it merely as a means.” In the same way, Adler argued, Mahler’s controversial “retouchings” of classical works was to render them more clearly in the context of bigger orchestras playing in bigger halls. *Gustav Mahler*, 43 and 31. Theodor Schmitt, however, discussing the slow movement of the Fourth Symphony, compares Mahler’s practice here to Bruckner’s (e.g., the Adagio of the Eighth Symphony) in which a theme emerges from an initial “Klangraum.” See “Klanglichkeit als Bauprinzip und Ausdrucksträger,” in *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers*, 103.

80. This appears as a footnote, to page 48 of the first edition. It was crossed out by copyists in the remaining copies of the first edition and deleted from subsequent editions. It is reprinted in the Dover edition, Gustav Mahler, *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 in Full Score* (1989).

81. The original performance direction for the first hammer blow at Fig. 336 was *kurzer, mächtig, aber dumpf hallender Schlag von nicht metallischem Charakter*. This was altered in the revision to *wie ein Axthieb*. See Peter Andraschke, “Stuktur und Gehalt im ersten Satz von Gustav Mahlers sechster Symphonie” in Danuser, *Gustav Mahler*, 206.

82. *Gerissen* appears for the violin soloist in the second movement of the Fourth Symphony [Fig. 6.3] and the violins in the second movement of the Fifth [Fig. 26]. The direction *scharf abgerissen* (sharply torn off) is applied to short, punched chords in the Finale of the First Symphony [Fig. 2.1]; the final tutti chord of the first movement of the Third Symphony is marked *scharf abreißen*.

83. In the Scherzo of the Sixth Symphony Mahler uses the direction *wie gepeitscht* (as if whipped) for a violent gesture in the string section. See Fig. 65.6.

84. Thomas Schäfer, *Modellfall Mahler: Kompositorische Rezeption in zeitgenössischer Musik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1999), 211.

85. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 5, 1909; cited in Karen Painter, “The Sensuality of Timbre: Responses to Mahler and Modernity at the Fin de Siècle,” *19th-Century Music* 18/3 (1995): 236–256, 242.

86. Arthur Farwell, *Musical America* 13, no. 12, January 28, 1911, 23; cited in Zoltan Roman, *Gustav Mahler’s American Years, 1907–1911: A Documentary History* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon, 1989), 441.

87. Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, 242.

88. *Ibid.*, 242.

89. *Ibid.*, 237.

90. *Ibid.*

91. Mahler’s letter to Max Marschalk (December 4, 1896) in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 200; cited by Stephen E. Hefling, “Mahler: Symphonies 1–4,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 369–416, 410, n. 42.

92. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 20, 1900; cited in Painter, “Sensuality of Timbre,” 242.

93. See James Buhler’s discussion of the slow movement of the Sixth Symphony in “Theme, Thematic Process, and Variant Form in the Andante Moderato of Mahler’s Sixth Symphony,” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 261–294.

## Chapter 2: Calling Forth a Voice

1. The *Gesellen* cycle grew out of Mahler’s infatuation with the soprano Joanna Richter in 1884.

2. The final chord does not include the seventh, as Schumann’s does, but the sense of irresolution is similar. The “missing” resolution is quite obvious if one plays the end of this song as written and then adds in a final tonic chord of D flat minor.

3. Mahler’s early song settings include an attempt to set Heine’s “Im wunderschönen Monat Mai.” Other stylistic echoes make Mahler’s debt to Schumann perfectly clear, such as the early song “Frühlingsmorgen.”

4. “Im Lenz,” “Winterlied,” and “Maitanz im Grünen” were all intended to be part of a projected set of *Fünf Lieder für Tenorstimme*. See Susanne Vill, *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalische Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1979), 37.

5. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trs. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), 1:260.

6. See Knud Martner, ed., *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler* (London: Faber, 1979), 190.

7. Arnold Schoenberg, “Gustav Mahler” (1912/1948), in *Style and Idea*, ed. Leonard Stein, trs. Leo Black (London: Faber, 1975), 470. Schoenberg also says that Mahler told him that the Eighth Symphony was written “as if it were dictated.”

8. Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 29 and 150.

9. Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trs. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

10. Mikhail Bakhtin, “The Dialogic Imagination,” in *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 116.

11. There are some obvious parallels between this and Mahler’s other midnight song, “Um Mitternacht,” from the *Rückert Lieder*.

12. See Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 15. The passage from Bauer-Lechner is found in *Recollections*, 160. Mahler’s claim is corroborated by the manuscript version housed at the University of Western Ontario. See Stephen McClatchie, “The 1889 Version of Mahler’s First Symphony: A New Manuscript Source,” *19th-Century Music*, 20/2 (1996): 105.

13. See McClatchie, “1889 Version of Mahler’s First Symphony,” 112.

14. Mahler’s early opera plans may well have been absorbed into the First Symphony. This is discussed in chapter 5.

15. Mahler’s most developed statement that the Third Symphony “is the very sound of nature” is contained in a letter to Richard Batka, November 18, 1896; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 197–198.

16. See Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. James Galston (New York: Da Capo, 1970), 24.

17. See Reinhold Kubik, “‘Progress’ and ‘Tradition’: Mahler’s Revisions and Changing Performance Practice Conventions,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 412.

18. Richard Wagner, *Beethoven* (1870), trs. Roger Allen (unpublished MS), 17.

19. *Ibid.*, 16.

20. “Der grosse Ap[p]ell” was Mahler’s own title and is marked on the autograph manuscript held in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (Kaplan Deposit). It is reproduced in Stephen E. Hefling, “Mahler: Symphonies 1–4,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 388. It was also Mahler himself who referred to the moment at the end of the development of the first movement of the Fourth as a “kleine Appell.”

21. Mahler’s childhood experience of military fanfares has often been remarked upon. “Morning and evening calls, assembly and drill motives were in him transformed into sound-images that were solidified around the figure of the old German common foot-soldier.” Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler*; repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 18. Adler also spent his childhood in Iglau.

22. The effect of such a melody was explored, as the *Ranz des Vaches*, in works by Liszt, Rossini, and Berlioz.

23. Discussing horn calls in Schubert, Charles Rosen wrote that they “are symbols of memory—or, more exactly, of distance, absence and regret.” He cites the pervasive horn calls in the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata, Op. 81 (*Les Adieux*). *The Romantic Generation* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), 117.

24. The idea of “wave form” was explored by the musicologist Ernst Kurth (1886–1946).

25. Raymond Knapp, picking up on a point made by Carolyn Abbate, discusses the idea of the instrumental voices listening to one another. *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler’s Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 141.

26. “Du siehst, mein Sohn, zum Raum wird hier die Zeit.” Gurnemanz’s words to Parsifal in Wagner’s opera mark the moment when the *Verwandlungsmusik* transforms the forest into the Temple of the Grail.

27. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht draws out this topic in the opening chapter of *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Piper, 1986).

28. See Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 3: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death* (London: Faber, 1985).

29. Letter to Anna Mildenburg, December 8, 1895; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 170–171. Today, orchestras invariably make use of bell plates.

30. Adler, *Gustav Mahler*, 58.

31. Carolyn Abbate refers to the harp’s “orphyic force” in Mahler’s music. See Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 151.

32. See Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Piper, 1986), 24–35; Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1991), 86. The term was first used in reference to Mahler’s music by Hans Redlich in “Mahlers Wirkung in Zeit und Raum,” *Musikblätter der Anbruch* 12/3 (1930): 92–96, 95.

33. The connection has been made by many commentators. For example, Peter Revers: “The main theme, so clearly reminiscent of the theme from the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony, evokes *Tristan und Isolde*.” See Revers, “‘... the heart-wrenching sound of farewell’: Mahler, Rückert, and the *Kindertotenlieder*,” trs. Irene Zedlacher, in *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 173–183, 180.

34. Revers underlines the point that Mahler’s mother buried eight of her fourteen children and survived to see a ninth die at adult age. Only two siblings survived Mahler’s death at the age of fifty. *Ibid.*, 173.

35. The emotional weight of these bars exceeds their setting to such an extent that Mahler returned to them in the Finale of the Ninth Symphony. See Monika Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Emil Katznbichler, 1971), 120–124, and the discussion in chapter 4.

36. The opening of the second movement of the Second Symphony is a good example.

37. Julian Johnson, “The Status of the Subject in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 18/2 (1994): 108–120, 113 and 114.

38. See Richard A. Kaplan’s discussion of this chord in the Tenth Symphony in “Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Mahler,” *Journal of Musicology* 14/2 (1996): 213–232, and “The Interaction of Diatonic Collections in the Adagio of Mahler’s Tenth Symphony,” *In Theory Only* 6 (1981): 29–39.

### Chapter 3: Constructing a Voice

1. I borrow this distinction from Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Chapter 7 is titled “Mahler and Gustav.”

2. Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalische Groteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 56.

3. Guido Adler, *Der Stil in der Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911).



4. “Nur das Genie vermag da eine eigene Auffassung durchzusetzen; bei den meisten bleibt es ein Kunterbunt von Stillflecken in Farben und Formen oder Formteilen heterogener Art.” *Ibid.*, 47.

5. Fritz Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1901–1902), 176; cited in Gershon Weiler, *Mauthner's Critique of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 32.

6. Peter Franklin touches on this aspect of the *Wunderhorn* texts, noting their difference to the lyrical subjectivism of Mahler's counterparts: “They rather present objective metaphors constructed out of contrasted, juxtaposed and superimposed kinds of ‘characteristic’ music.” *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 39.

7. According to Mahler, in a letter to Alma, June 28, 1904, he encountered Brahms's Piano Quartet, Op. 60, only much later: “I've discovered another piano quartet by Brahms, the one in C minor which we played four-hands last year. The first two movements are wonderful. Unfortunately the other two are trivial by comparison.” *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, ed. Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, with Knud Martner, trs. and rev. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 2005), 166.

8. In this context it is pertinent that Mahler's early Piano Quartet is discussed by Klaus Hinrich Stahmer under the title “Mahlers Frühwerk—Eine Stiluntersuchung” (i.e., “an investigation of style”). See Stahmer, ed., *Form und Idee in Gustav Mahlers Instrumentalmusik* (Wilhelmshaven: Heinrichschofens Verlag, 1980), 9–28.

9. Mahler to Max Marschalk, March 20, 1896; in Knud Martner, ed., *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler* (London: Faber, 1979), 178.

10. Martner comments that Mahler “obviously did so unconsciously.” *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 421, n. 156. The question of whether Mahler did or did not know the *Wunderhorn* collection before 1887 has been much discussed. See, for example, Susan Youens, “Words and Music in Germany and France,” in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 460–499, 479. Constantin Floros suggests that while Mahler did already know the *Wunderhorn* texts before writing the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, there may have been another poetic source in the poems of Rudolf Baumbach, which appeared in Leipzig sometime in 1878–1880. See Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler I: Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematischer Darstellung*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), appendix 1, 187–188.

11. Mahler to Ludwig Karpach, March 2, 1905; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 284.

12. Mahler's alterations to song texts are numerous. See, for example, Kurt Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. Inge Goodwin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 106; Raymond Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler's Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003).

13. See Henry-Louis de La Grange, “Music about Music in Mahler: Reminiscences, Allusions, or Quotations?” in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 139. The relation of Mahler's Ländler to Bruckner and actual folk dance models is discussed by Robert Samuels in *Mahler's Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 96.

14. Natalie Bauer-Lechner reports an experience that Mahler had, while composing a “relatively insignificant” part of *Das klagende Lied*, that strongly suggests a symptom of

self-repression: “Whenever he reached it, he always had a vision of himself emerging out of the wall in a dark corner of the room. He felt such intense physical pain, when this ‘double’ [*Doppelgänger*] tried to force its way through the wall, that he could not go on with his work and had to rush from the room—until one morning, while working on this same passage, he collapsed in a nervous fever.” Peter Franklin, ed., *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 53.

15. Monelle, *Sense of Music*, 175.

16. Eduard Hanslick, “Theater- und Kunstsachrichten,” *Neue Freie Presse*, January 16, 1900, 8; translated in Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years* (London: Faber, 1975), 430–431; cited in Jon W. Finson, “The Reception of Gustav Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* Lieder,” *Journal of Musicology* 5/1 (1987): 91–116, 102–103.

17. *Neue Musikalische Presse*, January 21, 1900; cited in Finson, “Reception of Gustav Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* Lieder,” 103.

18. See Herta Blaukopf, “Die deutsche Romantik und Mahler,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, 1990); also, Finson, “Reception of Gustav Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* Lieder.”

19. In Finson, “Reception of Gustav Mahler’s *Wunderhorn* Lieder,” 93.

20. See Stephen E. Hefling, “Mahler: Symphonies 1–4,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 369–416; see 386 and 411, n. 57.

21. Susanne Vill compares Mahler’s alteration of poetic texts with Schumann’s practice. See *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalische Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1979), 15.

22. Hans Bethge, *Die chinesische Flöte: Nachtdichtungen chinesischer Lyrik* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1907). Bethge based his versions on those in Hans Heilmann’s *Chinesische Lyrik* (1905), itself based on two French translations of the 1860s, one of which (Judith Gautier’s *Livre du Jade*) was not at all literal. See Fusako Hamano, “The Sources of the Texts in Mahler’s *Lied von der Erde*,” *19th-Century Music* 19/1 (Summer 1995): 83–95.

23. Arthur Wenk, “The Composer as Poet in *Das Lied von der Erde*,” *19th-Century Music* 1/1 (1977): 33–47, 33.

24. David Schiff, “Jewish and Musical Tradition in the Music of Mahler and Schoenberg,” *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9/2 (1986): 217–231, 227.

25. This bears comparison with contemporary Austrian literature, especially the interaction of tradition and modernity played out in the work of Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

26. I take issue with Esti Sheinberg, who reads this movement as directly satirizing “banality and narrow-mindedness” by its use of familiar materials. See *Irony, Satire, Parody, and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000), 79.

27. Hefling, “Mahler: Symphonies 1–4,” 399.

28. David B. Greene, *Mahler, Consciousness, and Temporality* (New York: Gordon & Breach, 1984), 27–28.

29. Schiff, “Jewish and Musical Tradition,” 225.

30. Robert Samuels, “Music as Text: Mahler, Schumann, and Issues in Analysis,” in *Theory, Analysis, and Meaning in Music*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 152–163, 155.

31. This is introduced at Fig. 56 in the second movement of the Sixth Symphony.

32. The opening is discussed in some detail by Raymond Knapp to show how Mahler calls into doubt the innocence of the opening and to create a sense of otherworldliness and “overwhelming nostalgia.” Knapp relates the return of the tonic at the end of the Exposition to Sonata-Rondo form. See “Suffering Children: Perspectives on Innocence and Vulnerability in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 22/3 (1999): 233–267.

33. This term was used by Mahler himself. See Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 164.

34. Knapp goes further, arguing that the opening of the second movement is a grotesque distortion of that of the first movement. “Suffering Children,” 256.

35. The parallel with the third movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, also a set of double variations, is significant.

36. Before *Die Jakobsleiter* (1917–1922), Schoenberg tried musically to cross this threshold on several occasions; the final movement of the Second String Quartet is an obvious example, but the ending of *Verklärte Nacht* anticipates this, and *Herzgewächse* attempts to push the idea further.

37. Deryck Cooke, *Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to His Music* (London: Faber, 1980), 81.

38. Cooke describes these as “folk-like motives,” suggesting that this is “a last glance at the *Wunderhorn* world—the bassoon actually has a figure from the song ‘Lob des hohen Verstandes.’” *Gustav Mahler*, 83. The bassoon motif in the symphonic movement (mm. 4–6) takes up the main theme of the song’s accompaniment.

39. Richard Batka, *Bohemia* 4 (March 1905); cited in Karen Painter, “The Sensuality of Timbre: Responses to Mahler and Modernity at the Fin de Siècle,” *19th-Century Music* 18/3 (1995): 236–256, 250.

40. Otto Neitzel, *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, November 39, 1904; cited in Painter, “Sensuality of Timbre,” 250.

41. Mahler’s interest in Bach is well known. In 1898 Guido Adler invited Mahler to join the advisory board of the Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich. Philipp Otto Naegele points out that, at its first Vienna performance, Mahler programmed the Fifth Symphony with Bach’s *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*. “This was a significant choice, not only because it is a polyphonic tour de force, but because its text reflected on the ‘new song’ Mahler himself was singing in his fifth symphony.” *Gustav Mahler and Johann Sebastian Bach* (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1983), 13.

42. If the contrast with the preceding Adagietto were not obvious enough from the juxtaposition of these two movements, Mahler brings back the Adagietto theme in the Finale, but it is characterized quite differently, now *grazioso* and dance-like in character, pressed into a social rather than lyrical form [Fig. 7.14] and as an episode in a fugal section and thus constrained and essentially alienated in a musical style to which it does not belong.

43. Henry-Louis de La Grange points out that at the premiere of the Seventh Symphony in Amsterdam in 1909, Mahler preceded his symphony with Wagner’s prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. See “L’enigme de la Septième,” in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 17–26, 19.

44. See Peter Davison, “Nachtmusik II: ‘Nothing but Love, Love, Love?’” in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 103. Davison suggests that *The Merry Widow* is paraphrased rather than quoted at Fig. 23, though both he and Bekker overlook that Mahler’s Seventh was completed four months before the premiere of Lehár’s operetta.

45. The festive sonority and gesture at the start of the Finale are reminiscent also of the opening of “Hochzeitstück,” the final part of *Das klagende Lied*, a work which suggests that the collective festival is hollow, since it temporarily masks an imminent social catastrophe.

46. “Above all I fear that Mahler is unfortunately subject to the hypnotism of force which is driving all German artists crazy nowadays. He seems to me to be an uncertain spirit, ironical, sad, agitated and weak, the spirit of a Viennese musician straining after Wagnerian grandiosity.” Romain Rolland, “French Music and German Music” (1905), in *Richard Strauss and Romain Rolland: Correspondence*, ed. Rollo Myers (London: Calder & Boyars, 1968), 209.

47. Cooke, *Mahler*, 90–91. In this, Cooke echoed an idea prevalent in the early reception of the work.

48. Elsa Bienenfeld, *Neues Wiener Journal*, November 10, 1909; cited in Painter, “Sensuality of Timbre,” 254. In this respect, the Finale of the Seventh anticipates Shostakovich, who deploys stridency to similarly ambivalent effect.

49. Monelle, *Sense of Music*, 185.

50. John Williamson, “Mahler and the Episodic Structure: The First Movement of the Seventh Symphony,” in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 27.

## Chapter 4: Plural Voices

1. Letter from Mahler to his sister Justine, April 1892; quoted in Peter Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43.

2. Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 32.

3. Mahler to Hermann Behn, August 17, 1895; in *Mahler's Unknown Letters*, ed. Herta Blaukopf (London: Gollancz, 1986), 26.

4. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*; quoted in Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 59.

5. “What humour there is in his C major symphony [No.1] and the ‘Pastoral’!... Haydn and Mozart certainly manage wit and gaiety, but not yet humour.” Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 179.

6. Theodor Helm's review of the Fourth Symphony in 1902 is quoted by Jon W. Finson in “The Reception of Gustav Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Lieder,” *Journal of Musicology* 5/1 (1987): 91–116, 103–104.

7. Paul Bekker, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, May 1911; translated in *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 351.

8. *Ibid.*, 351.

9. The link between Mahler's use of the term *Humoreske* and the work of Jean Paul has been discussed by many authors, including Jean Matter, “La signification de l'humour dans la musique de Mahler,” *Schweizer musikpädagogische Blätter* (January 1959): 28–33; Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler I: Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematischer Darstellung*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), 216; Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Piper, 1986), 175–178; Manfred Angerer, “Ironisierung der konvention und humoristische Totalität: Über die ersten Takte von Gustav Mahlers IV. Symphonie,” in *Vergleichend-systematische Musikwissenschaft: Beiträge zur Methode und Problematik der systematischen, ethnologischen und historischen Musikwissenschaft*, ed. Elisabeth Th. Hilscher

and Theophil Antonicek (Tutzing: Schneider, 1994), 579–581; Mirjam Schadendorf, *Humor als Formkonzept in der Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995).

10. The sketch is cited in Paul Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921), 145, and in Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 129.

11. James L. Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 37.

12. E. Mary Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981), 114.

13. Dargie quotes a definition of *Humor* from the *Reallexikon der deutsche Literaturgeschichte* that underlines its function as a redemption of the insignificant and imperfect. *Ibid.*, 115.

14. Jean Paul Richter, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, vol. 5 of *Werke* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1963); translated by Margaret R. Hale as *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 89.

15. Hale, *Horn of Oberon*, 93. See Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*, bk. 8, chap. 27.

16. Hale, *Horn of Oberon*, 93. Jean Paul's implied suggestion, that Haydn's music might share the same ironic instinct as Sterne's literature, is followed up by Mark Evan Bonds in "Haydn, Laurence Sterne, and the Origins of Musical Irony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44/1 (1991): 57–91.

17. Hale, *Horn of Oberon*, 100.

18. *Ibid.*, 94.

19. Mahler used the title "commedia humana" for Part 2 of the First Symphony (movements 4 and 5) in the versions of that work performed in Hamburg (1893) and Weimar (1894). See Stephen E. Hefling's discussion of irony in "Techniques of Irony in Mahler's Oeuvre," in *Gustav Mahler et l'ironie dans la culture Viennoise au tournant du siècle*, ed. André Castagné, Michel Chalon, and Patrick Florençon (Castelnau-le-Lez: Éditions Climats, 2001), 106. Alain Leduc suggests that Mahler's irony is closer to Jean Paul's *Humor* than to romantic irony proper. See "L'esprit de l'ironie dans la première symphonie de Gustav Mahler" in Castagné, Chalon, and Florençon, *Gustav Mahler et l'ironie dans la culture Viennoise*, 156.

20. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 33.

21. *Ibid.*, 43–44. Mahler also employs this metaphor in a letter to Max Marschall (March 26, 1896) in relation to Eichendorff's *Ahnung und Gegenwart*. See Knud Martner, ed., *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler* (London: Faber, 1979), 178–179.

22. See Robert Mühler, "Natursprache und Naturmusik bei Eichendorff," in *Aurora. Eichendorff-Almanach*, vol. 21, ed. Karl Schodrok (Neumarkt: Kulturwerk Schlesien, 1961), 18; cited by Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 57. The relevant section of Eichendorff's novella is bk. 1, chap. 6. Stephen E. Hefling has related this also to a scene in Adam Mickiewicz's play *Dziady*, to which Mahler's *Todtenfeier* is related. See "Mahler's 'Todtenfeier' and the Problem of Program Music," *19th-Century Music* 12/1 (1988): 27–53.

23. Monika Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Emil Katzschler, 1971), 58–59.

24. Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalische Grotteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 44.

25. Julius Korngold, *Neue Freie Presse*, November 6, 1909; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 328.

26. Hale, *Horn of Oberon*, 117.
27. *Ibid.*, 94.
28. See Raymond Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler's Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003); Robert Samuels, *Mahler's Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
29. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, in *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 200.
30. *Ibid.*, 228.
31. *Ibid.*, 205.
32. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 155.
33. *Ibid.*, 172.
34. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 129.
35. *Ibid.*, 30.
36. Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 70.
37. *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, ed. Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, with Knud Martner, trs. and rev. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 2005), 29.
38. Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler*; repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 42.
39. *Ibid.*, 39.
40. Alma also underlined that the carnivalesque mixing and distortion of voices acts as a foil for Mahler's idealism: "Seine Werke, in denen, berliozhaft, schöne Gesangsmelodien sich zuweilen in teuflische Fratzen verändern konnten, suchte er dann wieder zur größten Reinheit hinaufzuheben." *Mein Leben* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1960), 47.
41. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, in Morris, *Bakhtin Reader*, 116, n. 3.
42. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 97. Raymond Monelle discusses four types of Mahlerian voice: the voice of the Volk; the voice of the classical composer; the intrusion of the everyday; the tragic orator. Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), chap. 7: "Mahler and Gustav," 178.
43. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 178. Alma noted in her diary her first reactions to Mahler's songs: "Yesterday, Alex [Zemlinsky] and I discussed his songs—he sarcastic and mocking, I unimpressed. Truly, they don't correspond to his personality. This studied naivety and simplicity, and he the most complex of characters. I would like to tell him so but fear he might be insulted." Diary entry, November 30, 1901, in Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Diaries 1898–1902*, trs. and ed. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 1997), 448.
44. Kurt Blaukopf cites Ethel Smyth ("Impressions That Remained") on the relationship between Mahler and Marion von Weber: "Gustav Mahler . . . fell in love with her and his passion was reciprocated—as well it might be, for in spite of his ugliness he had demonical charm. A scandal would mean leaving the army, and Weber shut his eyes as long as was possible, but Mahler, a tyrannical lover, never hesitated to compromise his mistress." Captain Weber, Smyth suggests, subsequently went mad. Kurt Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler: A Documentary Study* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 180–181.
45. See Monelle on horse-riding topics in *Sense of Music*.
46. Deryck Cooke, *Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to His Music* (London: Faber, 1980), 42.
47. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 33.
48. Hefling, "Techniques of Irony in Mahler's Oeuvre."

49. In the orchestral version, “mit gebrochener Stimme.” The importance of the correct tone is underlined by Mahler’s anxiety about the sound of the soprano voice in the Finale of the Fourth Symphony. The direction in the score is that the part is “to be sung with childlike and serene expression; absolutely without parody!”

50. Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge*, 50.

51. Samuels, *Mahler’s Sixth Symphony*, 115–116.

52. Leduc, “L’esprit de l’ironie dans la première symphonie de Gustav Mahler,” 144.

53. Hefling, “Techniques of Irony in Mahler’s Oeuvre.”

54. Esti Sheinberg comments, “Music juxtapositions of apparently irreconcilable incongruities would convey this type of irony”; she also refers to it as “existential irony.” *Irony, Satire, Parody, and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000), 61–62.

55. I am grateful to Stephen E. Hefling for the suggestion that likely precedents for this can be found in late Beethoven, particularly in the quartets—such as the waltz-finale of Op. 132, the presto of Op. 131, or even the scherzo of Op. 127.

56. Sheinberg makes an interesting comparison between certain waltzes by Johann Strauss and their deformations by Mahler in the second movement of his Fourth Symphony. In the case of the scherzo of the Third Symphony (mm. 147–148), she suggests that Mahler quotes from Strauss’s *Frühlingsstimmen* waltz, showing how the original is distorted through exaggeration. *Irony, Satire, Parody, and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*, 94ff. Stephen E. Hefling similarly suggests that Strauss’s waltz suite *Freut Euch des Lebens*, “which Mahler probably knew from his youth,” is paraphrased, in 4/4 meter, in the first movement of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony, its melodic material “not far removed from nineteenth-century popular music in its simple shape and phrasing.” “Aspects of Mahler’s Late Style,” in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 199–223, 211.

57. Henry-Louis de La Grange, “L’énigme de la Septième,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 13–26, 18.

58. Hefling, “Aspects of Mahler’s Late Style,” 206. Vera Micznik, discussing the Ninth, defines “burlesque” as “an extravagant incongruity between a subject and its treatment. Either an important or elevated subject is treated in a trivial way, or a low, trifling subject is treated with mock dignity.” “Mahler and ‘The Power of Genre,’” *Journal of Musicology* 12/2 (1994): 117–151, 147.

59. Philip Thomson, *The Grotesque* (London: Methuen, 1972), 8.

60. *Ibid.*, 18.

61. Mahler’s lifelong friend, Guido Adler, wrote of him that “his heart kept its naïve belief in fairy-tales and in a visionary fairy-tale bliss”; Adler went on: “Schiller characterizes a poet such as this, who seeks nature, as ‘sentimental,’ and the poet who is himself nature, as ‘naïve.’ In Mahler the naïve and the sentimental alternate.” *Gustav Mahler*, 40.

62. Pierre Boulez, “Gustav Mahler Up-to-Date?” in *Gustav Mahler in Vienna*, ed. Sigrid Wiesmann (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 14.

63. Maximilian Muntz, *Deutsche Zeitung*, December 14, 1905; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 244–245.

64. Letter from Richard Strauss to Gustav Mahler, March 5, 1905; in *Gustav Mahler—Richard Strauss: Correspondence 1888–1911*, ed. Herta Blaukopf, trs. Edmund Jephcott (London: Faber, 1984), 75.

65. James Buhler, "Theme, Thematic Process, and Variant Form in the Andante Moderato of Mahler's Sixth Symphony," in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 261–294.

66. Hans Redlich (1968); cited by Buhler in "Theme, Thematic Process, and Variant Form," 264.

67. Paul Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921); cited by Buhler in "Theme, Thematic Process, and Variant Form," 266.

68. Buhler, "Theme, Thematic Process, and Variant Form," 267.

69. Mahler was accused of sentimentality in some unlikely passages. Walter Riezler, in a criticism of the premiere of the Eighth Symphony in 1910, wrote that the *Pater Ecstaticus* was not ecstatic but "schmalzig" and that the worship of the *Mater Gloriosa* was like "a trivial love-scene by Donizetti." Cited in Christian Wildhagen, *Die Achte Symphonie von Gustav Mahler: Konzeption einer universalen Symphonik* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 145.

70. Raymond Monelle says of the second movement of the Second Symphony that it represents an urban nostalgia for countryside innocence and is thus "really a description of a projected subjectivity" rather than an expression of a genuine one. The difference, he suggests, is found in little touches of articulation and instrumentation, such as the use of glissandi: "The effect is not gross, but the warmhearted charm, the Gemächlichkeit, is laid on a little too thickly. Most conductors and orchestras play this passage with too much 'good taste'; it should surely sound very slightly gamy and rancid." *Sense of Music*, 178.

71. Karen Painter has noted that this remark could lend itself to an anti-Semitic reading. Painter, *Mahler and His World*, is the source for the four epigraphs to this section, at 262, 296, 323, and 350, respectively.

72. See Henry-Louis de La Grange, "Music about Music in Mahler: Reminiscences, Allusions or Quotations?" in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 136. Vera Micznik also suggests that Mahler's play of genre constitutes a kind of "Stravinskian neoclassicism before its time." "Mahler and 'The Power of Genre,'" 136. This idea of neoclassicism in Mahler is problematic because his music exhibits a clear sense of nostalgia for the authorial voice that his genre play depicts as an absent center. This is not the case in Stravinsky's music, which is closer to the postmodern in its distance from any nostalgia.

73. Franz Willnauer's tally of performances Mahler conducted during his decade at the Hofoper alone (not including orchestral engagements) comes to 648. *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1993), 231–235.

74. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 153. Peter Franklin notes that it is hard to know which passage Mahler meant in a movement that "is fascinatingly allusive throughout" (219, n. 12).

75. Peter Franklin suggests that the first two bars of the main theme of the Trio of the second movement of the First Symphony (a slow waltz tempo) bear close resemblance to the second theme of the Scherzo of Bruckner's Third Symphony (mm. 61–62). Mahler had made the piano duet version of this work in 1878. See Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 172 and 221, n. 7.

76. David Schiff, "Jewish and Musical Tradition in the Music of Mahler and Schoenberg," *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9/2 (1986): 217–231, 223. Schiff emphasizes the Hebrew idea of *midrash*, a textual gloss or interpretation, in Mahler's music.

77. Note the orchestration, the disjunct bass line, the G major tonality, the slow tempo, the contrapuntal rather than chordal texture, and the "epiphanic sentiment." See James



L. Zychowicz, *Mahler's Fourth Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30. The link was made earlier by Henry-Louis de La Grange in "Music about Music in Mahler," 151.

78. Rudolf Stephan compares the second movement of the Second Symphony with a waltz by Robert Volkmann (the third movement of Volkmann's F major String Serenade, Op. 63). See Rudolf Stephan, *Gustav Mahler. II: Symphonie c-moll* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1979); cited in Theodor Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983), 20. Schmitt compares it to Beethoven's E flat Piano Trio, Op. 70/2 (third movement).

79. Theodor Schmitt compares the second movement of the Third Symphony with the Menuet of Haydn's E flat Piano Sonata (Hob. XVI: 49). *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers*, 26.

80. Schiff, "Jewish and Musical Tradition in the Music of Mahler and Schoenberg," 225.

81. "This F-Major piece is the spitting image of Mahler's reverence for Mozart. In hardly any of today's compositions is the style of a past era revived so vividly and peculiarly as in this delicate piece." Elsa Bienenfeld, *Neues Wiener Journal*, November 10, 1909; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 326.

82. Kurt Blaukopf underlines this connection, evident, for example, at the chorale entry in the Finale of the Second Symphony. *Gustav Mahler*, trs. Inge Goodwin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 103.

83. Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 3: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death* (London: Faber, 1985), 533–534. See also Phillip Otto Naeyegele, *Gustav Mahler and Johann Sebastian Bach* (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1983), 13.

84. Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 3*, 357.

85. Kurt Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler: A Documentary Study* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 260–261.

86. Peter Davison, for example, relates the first *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh Symphony to both Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (act 1, scene 3; cf. Mahler 7/2, m. 126) and Bizet's *Carmen* (cf. Mahler 7/2, m. 189) and the second *Nachtmusik* to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. "Nachtmusik I: Sound and Symbol" and "Nachtmusik II: 'Nothing but Love, Love, Love?'" in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 70–71.

87. Mahler's attitude toward Bruckner was ambivalent. He got to know the older composer in 1877 through the Academic Wagner Society and made a piano duet version of his Third Symphony, published in 1880. But his comments on Bruckner's music are mixed. On hearing the Ninth Symphony in Salzburg in August 1906, Mahler commented in a letter to Alma: "The work is the last word in absurdity." The comment was originally omitted by Alma in her version of the letter. See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 239.

88. Theodor Helm, "Viennese Music Letter," in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 293.

89. Marius Flothius, "Mahlers Sechste Sinfonie," in *Gustav Mahler*, ed. Hermann Danuser, *Wege der Forschung*, Band 653 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 238–252.

90. See Wildhagen, *Die Achte Symphonie von Gustav Mahler*, 353–357.

91. La Grange, "Music about Music in Mahler."

92. Mahler's use of this motif and its provenance were first pointed out in 1960 by Philip Barford and have since been discussed widely. See Philip Barford, "Mahler: A Thematic Archetype," *Music Review* 21 (1960), 297–316.

93. See, for example, the discussion of the influence of Smetana's *Huďbička* on Mahler's music, in Donald Mitchell, "Mahler and Smetana: Significant Influences or Accidental Parallels?"

in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 110–121, 110. Gilbert Kaplan discusses a link, with similarly programmatic overtones, between the Adagietto of the Fifth Symphony and Bizet's 'L'Arlesienne' Suite no. 1. See "Adagietto: 'From Mahler with Love,'" in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 396.

94. Robert P. Morgan, "Ives and Mahler: Mutual Responses at the End of an Era," *19th-Century Music* 2/1 (1978): 72–81, 72.

95. "Aus der Konzertwelt," anonymous review in *Neue Musikalische Presse* XIV, no. 4 (Feb. 18, 1905), p. 53, of a concert given on the same date; cited by Finson, "Reception of Gustav Mahler's *Wunderhorn Lieder*," 104.

96. Obviously there are some exceptions to this. One of the most notable is Mahler's debt to Hans Rott. See Paul Banks, "Hans Rott and the New Symphony," *Musical Times* 130 (May 1989: 142–147; also, Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 146. Peter Franklin suggests that the whole of the Finale of Mahler's Third Symphony must be regarded as modeled on Rott's Symphony. *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 75.

97. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht began his classic study of Mahler's musical language by considering the extravagant letter of the nineteen-year-old Mahler to his friend Josef Steiner in 1879. *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Piper, 1986). The letters appear in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 54–57.

98. Letter to Anton Krisper, December 14, 1879; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 59. I am grateful to Stephen E. Hefling for pointing out the similarity between part of this letter and the line "Könnst lachen und könnte weinen, doch sagen könnst ich es Keinem," which later appears in "Im Lenz" of 1880, set to music that reappears as the song of the bone flute in *Das klagende Lied* (see chapter 2).

99. Stuart Feder notes similarly that the "literary letters" to Fritz Löhr in 1885 (especially that of January 1) describe events "rather like a dramatic *mis-en-scène*." "Before Alma... Gustav Mahler and 'Das Ewigweibliche,'" in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 90.

100. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 131. The ending of "Im Lenz" demonstrates just such a strategy.

101. La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, xxvi.

102. *Ibid.*, 147.

103. Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*, 94ff.

104. Stephen E. Hefling, "Aspects of Mahler's Later Style," in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 211.

105. Mahler conducted *Zar und Zimmermann* on several occasions, including with great success in his first season at the Hofoper. See Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 181. In letters to Alma, Mahler made frequent alterations to the line "O selig, O selig, ein Kind noch zu sein," the refrain of the song "Sonst spielt' ich mit Zepter, mit Krone und Stern" from act 3, scene 5. See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 179.

106. Letter to Fritz Löhr, August 18, 1886; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 98.

107. Letter to Arnold Berliner, June 5, 1894; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 154.

108. Alma tells of Mahler's fondness for operetta in her memoirs. Alma Mahler-Werfel, *And the Bridge Is Love* (London: Hutchinson, 1959), 35.

109. Harry Zohn, *Karl Kraus* (New York: Twayne, 1971), 115.

110. See James L. Zychowicz, "Introduction" to *Die Drei Pintos: Based on Sketches and Original Music of Carl Maria von Weber/ Gustav Mahler*, ed. James L. Zychowicz (Madison, Wis.: A-R Editions, 2000), ix.

111. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 176–177.

112. Theodor Helm and Robert Hirschfeld both pointed to “the *Freischütz* waltz” in the second movement of Mahler’s First Symphony. See Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 293. Donald Mitchell suggested that Mahler’s music shows a debt to the ballet music from Weber’s *Oberon*. *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 2: The Wunderhorn Years* (London: Faber, 1975), 296–297.

113. James L. Zychowicz links Mahler’s approach to completing *Der Drei Pintos* to his later “retouchings” of other works (*Figaro*, *Euryanthe*, *Oberon*). “Introduction,” xvi. In 1907, for example, Mahler revised Weber’s *Oberon*, abridging the spoken dialogue and setting some of it to music drawn from themes used elsewhere in the score. See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 272.

114. Quoted in Zychowicz, “Introduction,” xvi: “Wo Weberei, wo Mahlerei—einerlei—das Ganze ist *per Bacco* ein infamer, antiquierter Schmarren.”

115. Guido Adler repeats a very similar line: “So fully had the arranger entered into the spirit of the ‘tone-weaver’ that the Mahler pieces were considered Weberesque and the Weber numbers Mahleresque.” *Gustav Mahler*, 32.

116. Susan Youens, “Schubert, Mahler, and the Weight of the Past: ‘Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen’ and ‘Winterreise,’” *Music and Letters* 67/3 (1986): 256–268.

117. Miriam Whaples, “Mahler and Schubert’s A minor Sonata D.784,” *Music and Letters* 65 (1984): 255–263.

118. Josef B. Foerster, *Der Pilger: Erinnerungen eines Musikers* (Prague: Artia, 1955), 403. Foerster himself heard Haydn in the first half and Bach in the second. Cited in Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers*, 14. Schmitt compares the second movement of the Third Symphony with Schubert’s Second Symphony in B flat (the trio theme from the Menuet). See *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers*, 28.

119. Susanne Vill links this setting also to Wagner (via its *Tristan* harmonies). *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalische Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1979), 17. This connection is underlined by others, including Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 1: The Early Years* (London: Faber, 1958), 127–128.

120. See Vill, *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalische Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers*, 17. Schumann set seven poems from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Mendelssohn 3, Brahms 2, and Weber 11).

121. E. Mary Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Peter Lang: Bern, 1981), 67.

122. Hefling, “Techniques of Irony in Mahler’s Oeuvre,” 105.

123. Reinhard Kapp, “Schumann Reminiscenzen bei Mahler,” in *Musik-Konzepte: Sonderband Gustav Mahler*, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Munich: Edition text + kritik, 1989), 325–361.

124. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 181.

125. Robert P. Morgan suggests that fragment of Liszt’s *Rhapsodie espagnole* is to be found in the third movement of Mahler’s Third Symphony. “Ives and Mahler,” 75. Monika Tibbe identifies the post horn episode in the same movement with reference to a handbook of military fanfares. Busoni, cited by Tibbe, compared it to a melody from Liszt’s “Rhapsodie Espagnole.” See Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Emil Katzbichler, 1971), 89–90.

126. Henry-Louis de La Grange, “Berlioz und Mahler: Von musikalischen Roman zum Sphärenengesang,” in *Musikkulturgeschichte: Festschrift für Constantin Floros zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Petersen, 87–104. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1990). La Grange cites Aaron Copland, “Berlioz today,” in *Copland on Music* (New York: Norton, 1963), 112.

127. La Grange, “Berlioz und Mahler,” 94. This division, which characterizes the first five of Mahler’s symphonies, is central to the literary works of Jean Paul Richter.

128. *Ibid.*, 87.

129. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 1.

130. See Tibbe, *Über die Verwendlung*, 116–123.

131. Tibbe advises caution in reading between such instances. In the Andante of the Fourth Symphony (mm. 80–81) there appears to be a direct quotation of a phrase from the second of the *Kindertotenlieder*, a passage that sets the line “doch ist uns das vom Schicksal abgeschlagen” (mm. 48ff.). Tibbe points out that the respective composition dates of the two works make it clear that the song quotes from the symphony, not the reverse (the Fourth Symphony was composed in 1899–1900; “Nun seh’ ich wohl” was composed in the summer of 1904). See Tibbe, *Über die Verwendlung*, 118.

132. *Ibid.*, 123.

133. For example, those identified by Tibbe, *Über die Verwendlung*, 123; Donald Mitchell, “Eternity or Nothingness? Mahler’s Fifth Symphony,” in *The Mahler Companion*, ed. Donald Mitchell and Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 236–325; Frans Bouwman, “Mahler’s Tenth Symphony: Rediscovered Manuscript Pages, Chronology, Influences and ‘Performing Versions,’” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 457–493; Hefling, “Aspects of Mahler’s Late Style,” 214–215.

134. Edward R. Reilly comments: “This is evidently the earliest of the overt borrowings in various forms that would crop up in Mahler’s first four symphonies and, somewhat more subtly, in his later works as well.” “Das Klagende Lied Reconsidered,” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 31. Reilly notes that Paul Banks and David Matthews, in their appendix to Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 1*, suggest that the song quotes from the cantata, not the other way round. See Reilly, “Das Klagende Lied Reconsidered,” 32, n. 18.

135. Peter Franklin, “Mahler,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:620.

## Chapter 5: Genre and Voice

1. This line is cited approvingly by Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 27. See Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 76, where it is given as: “That music recites itself, as its own content, narrates without narrative, is no tautology.”

2. This idea has been pursued prominently by Vera Micznik. See, for example, “‘Ways of Telling’ in Mahler’s Music: The Third Symphony as Narrative Text,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldersot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 295–323.

3. Jeffrey Kallberg underlines that genre has to do with a specific tone (a romantic variant of the baroque concept of *Affekt*): “As several critics have observed, generic codes frequently

function like a tone of voice rather than a more clear cut signal.” The different “tones” that distinguish different genres may be related to specific vocal models, so the movement between genres is also, literally, a movement between voices (character, affect, figure). “The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin’s Nocturne in G Minor,” *19th-Century Music* 11/3 (1988): 233–261, 240.

4. Vera Micznik, “Mahler and ‘The Power of Genre,’” *Journal of Musicology* 12/2 (1994): 117–151, 121.

5. Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trs. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14.

6. Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 92–94. Adorno points to the same thing as “Charakteren.” See also Robert Samuels, *Mahler’s Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 95; Jim Samson, “Chopin and Genre,” *Music Analysis* 8/3 (1989): 213–231.

7. See Samson, “Chopin and Genre”; Kallberg, “Rhetoric of Genre”; Micznik, “Mahler and ‘The Power of Genre.’” See also Heather Dubrow, *Genre* (London and New York: Methuen 1982).

8. Reproduced in Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 2: The Wunderhorn Years* (London: Faber, 1975), 430–431. Also cited by Kurt von Fischer, “Bemerkungen zu Gustav Mahlers Liedern,” in *Gustav Mahler*, ed. Hermann Danuser. Wege der Forschung, Band 653 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 69–81, 75.

9. This is underlined by Dubrow’s discussion of the old English legend of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. *Genre*, 23.

10. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 20, 1900; trs. in *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 296.

11. Samuels, *Mahler’s Sixth Symphony*, 115–116.

12. Leo Treitler, “History, Criticism, and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 3/3 (1980): 193–210, 197.

13. *Ibid.*, 197.

14. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, in *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 189 and 192.

15. Adorno, *Mahler*, 77.

16. Michael Oltmanns comments on the proximity of Mahler’s songs to ballades, often noted in reception, in terms of both musical structure and poetic topics. *Strophische Strukturen im Werk Gustav Mahlers* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1987), 94–95.

17. Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 130.

18. “Im Mittelpunkt des balladischen Liedes steht das Erzählte, im Mittelpunkt des lyrischen der Erzähler.” Oltmanns, *Strophische Strukturen*, 144.

19. Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 70.

20. See Monika Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Emil Katzschlich, 1971), 24–33, for a discussion of the first movement of the First Symphony in this respect.

21. Adorno, *Mahler*, 75.

22. Reproduced in Edward R. Reilly, “Das Klagende Lied Reconsidered,” in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 27.

23. Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 3: Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death* (London: Faber, 1985), 68 and 76.

24. The debate about whether to perform these songs with one or two singers is an old one. See E. Mary Dargie, *Music and Poetry in the Songs of Gustav Mahler* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981) 150; Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 2*, 260. Henry-Louis de La Grange has demonstrated that Mahler always performed these songs with one singer, never with two. He also seems to have preferred male voices for all his songs. See La Grange, *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 2: Vienna; The Years of Challenge (1897–1904)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 732.

25. Peter Franklin underlines that the female voice is “strikingly characterized as Other, as feminine in its dance-like reiterations, comforting as a lullaby.” He goes on to ask: “Who does sing it? From Mahler’s cultural viewpoint, does the masculine composer’s voice tend to assume a feminized *Muttersprache* in his compositions, when he begins to ‘sing’? Might this music in some way unseat, or does it rather appropriate the ‘master narrative’ that would favour the iconoclastic sentinel over his conservative girlfriend with her sirenlike consolations?” “‘A Soldier’s Sweetheart’s Mother’s Tale?’ Mahler’s Gendered Musical Discourse,” in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 112 and 114.

26. Ibid., 119.

27. Adorno, *Mahler*, 75.

28. Oltmanns, *Strophische Strukturen*, 94–95.

29. Stephen E. Hefling shows how sketch study corroborates the idea that Mahler’s music is based on the traditional structural polarity of bass and soprano voices, citing Michael Kennedy, who says that “the fundamental principle of Mahler’s technique of composition was two-part counterpoint.” Michael Kennedy, *Mahler*, rev. ed. (New York, 1990), 106; cited in Hefling, “‘Ihm in die Lieder zu blicken’: Mahler’s Seventh Symphony Sketchbook,” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 184. Kofi Agawu draws attention to this idea exposed in the opening of *Kindertotenlieder*. “Prolonged Counterpoint in Mahler,” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 217.

30. Elisabeth Schmierer, “The First Movement of Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*: Genre, Form, and Musical Expression,” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 253–259. See also Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler: Das Lied von der Erde* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1986), 28–36 and 111–119.

31. In an interview for the *New York Times* (March 30, 1910), Mahler was asked if he would ever write an opera. He replied: “No, never. I have been in the theatre all my life and have come too close to the operas of other men ever to care to write one.” Cited in Zoltan Roman, *Gustav Mahler’s American Years, 1907–1911: A Documentary History* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon, 1989), 362.

32. Blaukopf further suggests that in the late 1870s Mahler was, like Bruckner, interested in Wagner principally as orchestral music rather than as opera. See Kurt Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. Inge Goodwin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 39.

33. Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler I: Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematische Darstellung* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), 177.

34. See Mahler’s comments on Mascagni’s work in a letter to Max Marschall dated December 4, 1896: “Mascagni led us into this briar path, and I see no reason why someone else, you for instance, should not lead us out of it again.” In Knud Martner, ed., *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler* (London: Faber, 1979), 196.

35. Ibid., 200.

36. *Die Drei Pintos* was “the only opera project Mahler realized in his career.” James L. Zychowicz, ed., *Die Drei Pintos: Based on Sketches and Original Music of Carl Maria Weber/Gustav*

Mahler (Madison, Wis.: A-R Editions, 2000), ix. After the premiere of the opera on January 20, 1888, “by an irony of fate—Mahler became famous in the musical world not as a conductor nor as a symphonic composer, but as the ‘composer’ of a comic opera by Carl Maria von Weber.” Franz Willnauer, *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1993), 20.

37. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 170.

38. See Kurt Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler: A Documentary Study* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 178.

39. See Stephen E. Hefling, “Mahler’s ‘Todtenfeier’ and the Problem of Program Music,” *19th-Century Music* 12/1 (1988): 27–53.

40. *Ibid.*

41. According to Paul Stefan, Mahler wrote the libretto and some of the music for *Die Argonauten*. See Blaukopf, *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, 153.

42. See *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, ed. Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, with Knud Martner, trs. and rev. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 2005), 312–313, editorial note. Mahler was shocked to discover that in 1908 his sister Justine had lent his youthful libretto to Alfred Roller, who was considering a ballet based on the *Rübezahl* story for the Hofoper. When Justine forwarded this to Mahler in Hamburg, on its return from Roller, it turned out to be the libretto to *Die Argonauten*. Alma claims to have helped Mahler throw the manuscript of *Rübezahl* into the sea during a voyage to America, but it was found among her papers when she died (whereas *Die Argonauten* is lost).

43. Herta Blaukopf, “The Young Mahler, 1875–1880,” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 21.

44. Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 63.

45. *Ibid.*, 67.

46. *Ibid.*, 186.

47. Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 40.

48. Blaukopf, *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, 153.

49. Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler*; repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 60.

50. *Ibid.*, 61.

51. Mahler’s comment that the piece “was initially thought of as a fairy-tale for the stage” (in conversation with Ernst Decsey) is reported by Guido Adler in *Gustav Mahler*, 60. A letter from Mahler to Emil Freund (November 1, 1880) refers to the just completed *Das klagende Lied* as “my fairy play” [*Märchenspiel*]. See Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 65; Alma Mahler, ed., *Gustav Mahler: Briefe, 1879–1911* (Berlin: Zsolnay Verlag, 1924), 15.

52. See Blaukopf, “The Young Mahler, 1875–1880,” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 20–21; Edward R. Reilly, “Das klagende Lied reconsidered,” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 34. Susanne Vill comments that the ballad appears in several versions and that Mahler had probably encountered it before the Bechstein version. The three parts of Mahler’s original libretto form three acts of a “Märchenspiel für die Bühne.” *Vermittlungsformen verbalisierter und musikalische Inhalte in der Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1979), 18–26. Vill cites Ernst Decsey, “Stunden mit Mahler,” in *Die Musik* (Berlin), August 1911.

53. Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 49.

54. Blaukopf, *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, 170–171. See also Mahler’s letter to Fritz Löhr (June 22, 1884), describing how his incidental music was performed “with *tableaux vivants*.” Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 77.

55. Presumably this took a form not unlike the performance of *Das klagende Lied* by Martin Greif given at the Vienna Conservatoire. See Martner's footnote to letter 25, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 392.

56. Pierre Boulez, "Gustav Mahler Up-to-Date?" in *Gustav Mahler in Vienna*, ed. Sigrid Wiesmann (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 19.

57. See Blaukopf, *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, 153.

58. *Ibid.*, 262.

59. Act 4 of the original version. The passage in question appears on page 252 of the Schirmer vocal score.

60. Verdi's opera was performed in Vienna in the 1870s while Mahler was a student there and again after Verdi's substantial revision of the work was premiered in 1884 (i.e., before Mahler worked on his First Symphony). But Mahler could not afford to go to the opera when he was a student, and he was not in Vienna in 1884.

61. John Williamson, "Mahler and the Episodic Structure: The First Movement of the Seventh Symphony," in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium* ed. James L. Zychowicz (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 34.

62. That said, Mahler's damning account to Alma (in a letter of April 1, 1903) of a performance of Puccini's *Tosca* rather ironically complained about the repeated use of bells. "I need scarcely add that the score is a masterly sham; nowadays every shoemaker's apprentice is an orchestrator of genius." La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 116. It is notable that Mahler deploys against Puccini the very same kind of dismissive one-liner that issued from the pens of his own critics.

63. Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 19.

64. Max Brod, "Gustav Mahlers 'Opern Ohne Worte,'" in *Prager Sternenhimmel: Musik- und Theatererlebnisse der Zwanziger Jahre* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 1966), 248–254, 248.

65. Adorno, *Mahler*, 71.

66. In Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 178.

67. Stephen E. Hefling cites Mahler's letter to Fritz Löhr. See Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, note to 483–484; cited in Hefling, "Mahler: Symphonies 1–4," in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 382.

68. See Philip Friedheim, "Wagner and the Aesthetics of the Scream," *19th-Century Music* 7/1 (1983): 63–70.

69. See Maynard Solomon, "Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order," *19th-Century Music* 10/1 (1986), 3–23, 5.

70. Hefling, "Mahler: Symphonies 1–4," 389.

71. A similar intrusion of operatic violence is achieved at the start of "In diesem Wetter," the final song of *Kindertotenlieder*, and in "Ich hab' ein glühend Messer," the penultimate song of the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*.

72. "Mahlers Konzeption einer universalen Symphonik substituiert die szenische Umsetzung durch ein tönende Imagination, da die 'Sinfonie an sich' das theatralische Geschehen und dessen sinnbliche Verweise immer schon in sich trägt." Christian Wildhagen, *Die Achte Symphonie von Gustav Mahler: Konzeption einer universalen Symphonik* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 224.

73. See Philipp Otto Naegele, *Gustav Mahler and Johann Sebastian Bach* (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1983), 12–13. This basically repeats Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 123.



At the time of this writing (2007), Glyndebourne Festival Opera was preparing to stage the *St Matthew Passion* (dir. Katie Mitchell).

74. Raymond Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler's Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 11 and 13. See also Jeremy Barham, "The Cinematic in Gustav Mahler," unpublished paper given at "Mahler and the Twentieth Century" conference, Surrey University, U.K., March 2001.

75. Peter Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 85.

76. Jeffrey Langford has underlined the extent of this debt and suggested that Berlioz, frustrated by his lack of success in breaking into the Parisian opera scene, set about to create a similar sense of drama in instrumental music instead. In the words of Norbert Dufourcq, Berlioz "carried the drama from the theater to the concert hall." *La Musique française* (Paris: Picard, 1970), 275; cited by Langford, "The 'Dramatic Symphonies' of Berlioz as an Outgrowth of the French Operatic Tradition," *Musical Quarterly* 69/1 (1983): 85–103, 103.

77. Theodor Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983), 66.

78. Ferdinand Pfohl, "Mahler und Nikisch," *Jahrhundertfeier des Hamburger Stadttheaters* (Hamburg: Max Beck Verlag, 1927), 84; cited by Fritz Willnauer, *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1993), 22.

79. Willnauer, *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper*, 103.

80. Romain Rolland, "French Music and German Music" (1905); trs. in Rollo Myers, ed., *Richard Strauss and Romain Rolland: Correspondence* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1968), 214.

81. At the end of his career, Mahler himself insisted on the difference between orchestration for the theater and for the concert hall. In doing so, he implicitly concurred with earlier critics that he was guilty of using a theatrical technique in the symphonies. See his letter to Guido Adler from New York (January 1, 1910) about conducting orchestral concerts: "I am glad to be able to enjoy this for once in my life (apart from the fact that I keep on finding it *very instructive*, for the technique of the theatre is totally different, and I am convinced that many of my previous inadequacies in instrumentation arose from my being accustomed to hearing music in the totally different acoustic conditions of the theatre." In Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 348.

82. Max Kalbeck, *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, December 12, 1905; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 308–310.

83. See Willnauer, *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper*, 218–235.

84. Sandra McColl, "Max Kalbeck and Gustav Mahler," *19th-Century Music*, 20/2 (1996): 167–184, 173. Critics often linked Mahler's music to operetta and ballet. See Alex Winterberger and Robert Hirschfeld, cited in Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 29 and 32.

85. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 217.

86. Letter to Richard Strauss, December 4(?), 1901. See Herta Blaukopf, ed., *Gustav Mahler—Richard Strauss Correspondence, 1888–1911*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (London: Faber, 1984), 62.

87. The songs were not orchestrated or published until 1893. *Das klagende Lied* was revised in the same year but did not premiere until 1901.

88. The Budapest version is almost certainly that preserved at the University of Western Ontario. See Stephen McClatchie, "The 1889 Version of Mahler's First Symphony: A New Manuscript Source," *19th-Century Music* 20/2 (1996): 99–124. The 1893 revision is the Yale MS. The Weimar version is the New York Public Library MS.

89. *New York World*, December 19, 1909, M5; cited in Zoltan Roman, *Gustav Mahler's American Years, 1907–1911: A Documentary History* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon, 1989), 315.
90. Kallberg, "Rhetoric of Genre," 243. Cf. Jim Samson: "A genre behaves rather like a contract between author and reader, composer and listener, a contract which may of course be broken." "Chopin and Genre," *Music Analysis* 8/3 (1989): 213–231, 213.
91. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 20, 1900; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 296.
92. Robert Hirschfeld (review of Third Symphony in 1909); cited in Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 31–32.
93. Hefling, "Mahler: Symphonies 1–4," 398.
94. August Spanuth, *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 31, 1906; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 246.
95. Kallberg, "Rhetoric of Genre," 245.
96. Monelle, *Sense of Music*, 183.
97. *Ibid.*, 137. It is no surprise that the work that produced Mahler's most unequivocal critical success was also the work which most obviously tried to contain the generic heterogeneity of his music—the Eighth Symphony. As Henry-Louis de La Grange sums it up: "This symphony as a whole can be considered an attempt to synthesize all historical forms (symphony, cantata, oratorio, motet, song cycle) as well as all manner of styles (from homophonic to elaborately contrapuntal). Finally, the Eighth can be deemed the crossroads of all techniques of tonal composition, from the strictest to the freest." "Music about Music in Mahler: Reminiscences, Allusions, or Quotations?" in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 137.
98. Williamson, "Mahler and the Episodic Structure," 28.
99. *Ibid.*, 33–34.
100. Robert P. Morgan, "Ives and Mahler: Mutual Responses at the End of an Era," *19th-Century Music* 2/1 (1978): 72–81, 76.
101. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 205.
102. Peter Franklin, "Mahler," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:620.
103. Julian Johnson, "The Status of the Subject in Mahler's Ninth Symphony," *19th-Century Music* 18/2 (1994): 108–120.
104. Laurence Kramer, "As if a voice were in them': Music, Narrative, and Deconstruction," in *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 186.
105. La Grange, "Music about Music in Mahler," 125.
106. Boulez, "Gustav Mahler Up-to-Date?" 26.
107. Max Kalbeck, *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, November 19, 1900; cited by Henry-Louis de La Grange, "L'envers et l'endroit: Ironie, double-sens, ambigüité dans la musique de Mahler," in *Gustav Mahler et l'ironie dans la culture Viennoise au tournant du siècle*, ed. André Castagné, Michel Chalon, and Patrick Florençon (Castelnau-le-Lez: Éditions Climats, 2001), 80.
108. Letter to Arthur Seidl (February 17, 1897), in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 205.
109. Mark Evan Bonds, *After Beethoven: Imperatives of Originality in the Symphony* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 177. See also Hefling, "Mahler: Symphonies 1–4," and Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*. Peter Franklin describes the

Second and Third Symphonies as “post-Beethovenian choral symphonies” in *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 37.

110. Bonds, *After Beethoven*, 176.

111. Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 71.

112. David Schiff, “Jewish and Musical Tradition in the Music of Mahler and Schoenberg,” *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9/2 (1986): 217–231, 222.

113. Bonds, *After Beethoven*, 175.

114. *Ibid.*, 176.

115. *Ibid.*, 177.

116. *Ibid.*, 198.

117. Schiff, “Jewish and Musical Tradition,” 221. Leo Treitler suggests that all such tensions are to be found in the Finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. “History, Criticism, and Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 3/3 (1980): 193–210, 197ff.

118. Letter to Max Marschalk (March 26, 1896), in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 178–179.

119. Carolyn Abbate, “Opera as Symphony, a Wagnerian Myth,” in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, ed. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 92–124, 100.

120. *Ibid.*, 122.

121. Richard Kaplan, “Multi-Stage Exposition in Mahler’s Symphonies,” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 220–233.

122. *Ibid.*, 222.

123. For a discussion of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony in this respect, see Johnson, “Status of the Subject in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” 108–120.

124. Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 42.

125. *Ibid.*, 54.

126. Donald Mitchell often referred to a “frame” principle at work in the dramatic outer movements of Mahler’s symphonies. See, for example, “Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen,” in *Discovering Mahler. Writings on Mahler, 1955–2005* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 112–118. Peter Franklin, discussing the Second Symphony, notes “the contrast between the ‘New German’ complexity of the first movement’s formal plan, extreme volume levels and climactically emphasized harmonic dissonance and the more conventional size and mid-19th-century manners of the Andante.” “Mahler,” 617.

127. Langford, “‘Dramatic Symphonies’ of Berlioz as an Outgrowth of the French Operatic Tradition,” 85–103, 93.

128. Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalische Groteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 35.

129. Langford, “‘Dramatic Symphonies’ of Berlioz,” 96.

130. Henry-Louis de La Grange, “Berlioz und Mahler: Von musikalischen Roman zum Sphärenengesang,” in *Musikkulturgeschichte: Festschrift für Constantin Floros zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Petersen (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1990), 87–104, 103.

131. David B. Greene, *Mahler, Consciousness, and Temporality* (New York: Gordon & Breach, 1984), 104.

132. “Diese Ende ist keines der bloßen Chronologie; in Mahler hat sich die Gattung erfüllt (und aufgelöst).” Rudolf Stephan, “Gedanken zu Mahler,” in *Gustav Mahler*, ed. Hermann

Danuser, *Wege der Forschung*, Band 653 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 362–376, 367.

133. Franklin, “Mahler,” 623.

## Chapter 6: Ways of Telling

1. Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler: 1913), 45. “Strauss hat bis vor kurzem . . . von Mahlers Musik gern als ‘Literatur’ gesprochen.”

2. Herta Blaukopf, “The Young Mahler, 1875–1880,” in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16. Guido Adler also reports this: “For some time he even thought of devoting himself also to poetry.” *Gustav Mahler*, repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 19.

3. See Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler I: Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematischer Darstellung*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), 39–83; Hermann Danuser, *Musikalische Prosa*, Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, Band 46 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1975); Robert Samuels, *Mahler’s Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Vera Micznik, “‘Ways of Telling’ in Mahler’s Music: The Third Symphony as Narrative Text,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 295–323.

4. Pierre Boulez, “Gustav Mahler Up-to-Date?” in *Gustav Mahler in Vienna*, ed. Sigrid Wiesmann (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 18.

5. Kurt Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. Inge Goodwin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 75.

6. Julian Johnson, “Narrative Strategies in Hoffmann and Schumann,” in *Resounding Concerns*, ed. Rudiger Görner (Munich: Iudicium, 2003), 55–70.

7. Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. James Galston (New York: Da Capo, 1970), 139.

8. “Die Begegnung mit seinem Büchern ist für Mahler ein Erlebnis von determinierenden Kraft gewesen.” Specht, *Gustav Mahler*, 35.

9. Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 66. The passage is from bk. 6, chap. 3.

10. Inna Barssowa, “Mahler und Dostojewski,” in *Beträge ’79–81: Gustav Mahler Kolloquium 1979; Ein Bericht*, ed. Rudolf Klein (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981), 65–75, 71.

11. For example, in *The Idiot*, at the close of pt. 2, where Mrs Yepanchin, having suggested that she, like Aglaya, no longer wants to see Myshkin again, suddenly makes it clear that quite the opposite is the case. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, trs. David Magarshack (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1981), 358–359.

12. For example, in *The Idiot*, pt. 2, chap. 5, the description of the Prince’s self-loathing and emotionally unstable state.

13. See *The Idiot*, pt. 2, chap. 9.

14. See the story of Marie’s death in *The Idiot*, pt. 1, chap. 6, 94–104.

15. For example, the Prince’s recollection of the period of his “idiocy” in Switzerland. *The Idiot*, pt. 3, chap. 7, 462.

16. Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 62.

17. This key term of the Russian Formalists was first used by Viktor Shklovsky in his 1917 essay “Art as Device.” See the discussion in Erika Reiman, *Schumann’s Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 4.

18. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, in *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 90, 92, and 103.

19. *Ibid.*, 90–91.

20. Norbert Loeser, *Gustav Mahler* (Haarlem-Antwerp, Gottmer, 1950); cited by Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 64.

21. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, 91–92.

22. Adorno, *Mahler*, 164.

23. Julian Johnson, “The Status of the Subject in Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 18 (1994–1995): 109–120.

24. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 114.

25. Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 76.

26. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, 104.

27. In his chapter “Whose Gustav Mahler? Reception, Interpretation, and History,” Leon Botstein underlines the link between Mahler and the novel in a subsection heading, “Listening as Reading: Mahler and the Late Nineteenth-Century Novel.” In *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 35.

28. *Ibid.*, 37.

29. Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalische Groteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)*, 59, n. 115.

30. Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 203–208 and 82–83.

31. William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 120.

32. Letter to Siegfried Lipiner, June 1899; in *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Knud Martner (London: Faber, 1979), 236.

33. Letter to Lipiner, August 19, 1900; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 242.

34. Peter Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48 and 52.

35. Jeremy Barham, “Mahler’s Third Symphony and the Philosophy of Gustav Fechner: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Criticism, Analysis, and Interpretation,” PhD thesis, University of Surrey, U.K. See also Eveline Nikkels, ‘O Mensch! Gib Acht!’ *Friedrich Nietzsche’s Bedeutung für Gustav Mahler* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989).

36. Celestini, *Unordnung der Dinge*, 82.

37. *Ibid.*, 82–84.

38. Stephen E. Hefling, “Mahler’s *Todtenfeier* and the Problem of Program Music,” *19th-Century Music* 12/1 (1988): 27–53, 29.

39. Celestini, *Unordnung der Dinge*, 57–59.

40. *Ibid.*, 67.

41. Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, 136.

42. *Ibid.*, 211; cited by Martin Scherzinger, “The Finale of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony: A Deconstructive Reading,” *Music Analysis* 14/1 (1995): 69–88, 81.

43. Hefling speculates that this would have compromised Marion von Weber and, also, that the events of this story were too close to the suicide of his brother Otto, an aspiring composer who shot himself on February 6, 1895, apparently in the wake of an unhappy love affair

and a short time before the premiere of Gustav's Second Symphony. "Mahler's *Todtenfeier* and the Problem of Program Music," 38.

44. Bruno Walter referred to the First Symphony as Mahler's *Werther*. This would appear to support Hefling's assertion of the role of his affair with Marion von Weber.

45. Hefling, "Mahler's *Todtenfeier* and the Problem of Program Music," 35–36.

46. Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 9.

47. See Susan M. Filler, "Unfinished Works of Mahler: The Scherzo in C Minor, the Presto in F Major, the Tenth Symphony, and Comparative Arguments for 'Performing Versions,'" in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 437–456, 455. See also Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 214–216.

48. As a fifteen-year-old, Alma Schindler's taste was for Dehmel, Bierbaum, Rilke, and Liliencron. She boasted that when she married Mahler her library was bigger than his. Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Mein Leben* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1960), 21. Mahler often berated Alma for her choice of literature: "You see, it's just the same with your choice of reading matter: Shakespeare is positive and productive, while Ibsen is nothing but analysis, negation, infecundity" (letter of June 6, 1905). And again: "My Alma! Where are your ideas? Schopenhauer's writings on womanhood, Nietzsche's utterly false and brazenly arrogant theories of masculine supremacy, the gut-rotting, murky fuddle of Maeterlinck, the public-house rhetoric of Bierbaum and co. etc., etc?" (letter of December 19, 1901). A further attack on Maeterlinck in relation to occultism appears in a letter of April 1, 1903. See *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, ed. Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, with Knud Martner, rev and trs. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 2005), 207, 81, and 116.

49. See Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, 137; Adler, *Gustav Mahler*, 37; Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 43.

50. A letter to Alma of June 29, 1907, mentions a book by Mereshkovsky, which Mahler says "is wonderful, highly original," and later: "It's one of the finest things I know, indeed one of the few books I'd like to read for a second time." Antony Beaumont suggests that this is "presumably *Leonardo da Vinci*, the third novel of the trilogy *Christ and Antichrist* by Dimitri Mereshkovsky. Published in German translation in 1903, the book caused a *furor* in intellectual circles." See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 270.

51. See Morten Solvik, "Mahler's Untimely Modernism," in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 153–171.

52. Felix Adler *Bohemia*, September 20, 1908; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 319.

53. Cited by Constantin Floros, who also suggests that Mahler may well have been influenced by the publication in 1909 by Carl Krebs of *Des jungen Kreislers Schatzkästlein: Aussprüche von Dichtern, Philosophen und Künstlern; Zusammengetragen durch Johannes Brahms*. See Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 55, who cites Paul Stefan, *Gustav Mahler: Eine Studie über Persönlichkeit und Werk*, 4th ed. (Munich: Piper, 1912), 7: "Kreislers Wiedergeburt auf der Ebene des irdischen Lebens heißt Gustav Mahler."

54. Edgar Istel, ed., in *Mahlers Symphonien, erläutert mit Notenbeispielen* (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1910), 8–13. "[...] in seinem Wesen etwas eigentümlich Mystisch-Dämonisches—etwas E. Th. A. Hoffmannisch—Kreislerisches."

55. *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, April 1920; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 282.

56. Max Steinitzer, "Porträtskizzen und Momentbilder: Gustav Mahler," in *Rheinische Musik- und Theaterzeitung*, July 31, 1903; cited in *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, ed. Kurt Blaukopf (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 178.

57. Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler*, Vol. 1 (London, Gollancz, 1974), 61; cited by Stuart Feder in “Before Alma...Gustav Mahler and ‘Das Ewig-Weibliche,’” in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 89.

58. De La Grange, *Mahler*, Vol. 1, 602.

59. *Ibid.*, 656.

60. See Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler*, Vol. 2: *The Wunderhorn Years* (London: Faber, 1975), 234 and 264.

61. Blaukopf, *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, 195. The title was added for the work’s second performance in Hamburg in 1893.

62. See the introduction to Eulenberg Miniature Score, xvii.

63. See Julian Johnson, “Narrative Strategies in Hoffmann and Schumann,” in *Resounding Concerns*, ed. Rudiger Görner (Munich: Iudicium, 2003), 55–70.

64. See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 49–50. “If you were to devote a little of your time to the works of Hoffmann, you would gain entirely new insights into the unique relationship between music—that eternally mysterious, totally unfathomable art which can penetrate like lightning into the deepest recesses of our thoughts and feelings—and reality. You would perceive that the only true reality on earth is our inner self, and that for those who have understood this the real world is nothing but a contour, a worthless shadow.”

65. Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 76.

66. Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler*, Vol. 2, 225.

67. Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 177.

68. *Ibid.*, 83.

69. See Mahler’s letters to Josef Steiner (June 17, 1879) and Friedrich Löhr (August 29, 1895), in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 54 and 84.

70. Jost Hermand, “Der vertonte ‘Titan,’” *Hesperus* 29 (1965): 1–5, 4.

71. Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 25. Alma’s comment appeared in the foreword to the original German edition of Mahler’s letters. Julius Korngold, complaining that Mahler’s long themes did not lend themselves to clarity, related them to Jean Paul’s *Streckverse*. See “Feuilleton: Musik,” *Neue Freie Presse*, December 12, 1905, 1; cited in Sandra McColl, “Max Kalbeck and Gustav Mahler,” *19th-Century Music* 20/2 (1996): 167–184, 178.

72. See Mahler’s letter to Friedrich Löhr (July 22[?], 1883) in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 75.

73. Hermand, “Der vertonte ‘Titan,’” 4.

74. *Ibid.*, 5.

75. Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, 102.

76. Celestini, *Unordnung der Dinge*, 29.

77. Hermand, “Der vertonte ‘Titan,’” 5.

78. Letter to Oskar Eichberg, March 30, 1895; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 159.

79. Reiman, *Schumann’s Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul*, 18.

80. *Ibid.*, 19.

81. Richard Alewyn, “Eine Landschaft Eichendorffs,” in *Eichendorff Heute*, ed. Paul Stöcklein (Munich: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1960), 19–43.

82. Herta Blaukopf follows up the link to *Ahnung und Gegenwart* in relation to the Serenade of the Seventh, specifically the use of guitar, citing the figure of the spontaneous musician in Eichendorff’s novella who improvises songs while accompanying himself

on the guitar. “Die deutsche Romantik und Mahler,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 5. Peter Davison makes reference to the same work, citing the parallels between the second movement of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony and Eichendorff’s description of wood birds, sleep, and echoing horns in the distance. See Davison in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 69.

83. Julius Korngold cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 331.

84. McColl, “Max Kalbeck and Gustav Mahler,” 174.

85. Jean Paul Richter, *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), vol. 5 of *Werke* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1963); trs. Margaret R. Hale as *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter’s School for Aesthetics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), pt. 2, sec. 12: “On the Novel,” paragraph 75, 185–186.

86. J. W. Smeed, *Jean Paul’s Dreams* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 38.

87. *Ibid.*, 39.

88. *Ibid.*, 42–43.

89. The same instruments are prominent also in the fiction of E. T. A. Hoffmann.

90. Alewyn, “Eine Landschaft Eichendorffs,” 22.

91. Celestini, *Unordnung der Dinge*, 47.

92. *Ibid.*, 72.

93. Reiman, *Schumann’s Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul*, 25.

94. Peter Revers, “Return to the Idyll: The Night Pieces in Gustav Mahler’s Seventh Symphony,” in *Colloque International Gustav Mahler: 25, 26, 27 Janvier 1985* (Paris: Association Gustav Mahler, 1985), 42–43.

95. Paul Bekker, *Gustav Mahler*, 83–84; cited in Theodor Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers: Historisch-vergleichenden Studien zu Mahlers Kompositionstechnik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983), 11.

96. Schmitt quotes Bruno Walter, *Briefe, 1894–1962* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1969), 382.

97. See Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl’s Theory of Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 124.

98. Richard Wagner, *Beethoven* (1870), trs. Roger Allen (unpublished MS), 17–18.

99. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trs. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 33. Nietzsche follows this immediately by quoting Hans Sachs’s dream speech from Wagner’s opera. *Ibid.*, 34.

100. In several sketches for the Third Symphony there are references to Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. See Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 46.

101. Danuser, *Musikalische Prosa*; chap. 6 is “Konstruktion des Romans bei Gustav Mahler,” pt. 2: “Dream as Reminiscence,” 103.

102. Martin Geck, *Von Beethoven bis Mahler: Die Musik des deutschen Idealismus* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1993), 422–423.

103. Paul Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921), 53. The “Lindenbaum” section was, he said, a “Symbol der Schmerzbefreiung durch den Traum.”

104. Letter to Max Marschall, December 4, 1896; in Martner, *Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 200.

105. *Ibid.*, 196.

106. Constantin Floros points out that two of Mahler’s favorite operas were Anton Rubinstein’s *Dämon* and Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel*. *Gustav Mahler I*, 171. Floros



suggests a link between the “Musik der Schutzengel” in the latter and the “Misterioso” motif in the Andante of Mahler’s Sixth Symphony. *Ibid.*, 175–176.

107. See Franz Willnauer, *Gustav Mahler und die Wiener Oper* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 1993), 231.

108. Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 104–105.

109. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Zeitung*, May 20, 1911; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 345.

110. La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 363.

111. See Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*; Danuser, *Musikalische Prosa*; Abbate, *Unsung Voice*; Micznik “‘Ways of Telling’ in Mahler’s Music,” 295–323; Anthony Newcomb, “Narrative Archetypes and Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

112. Vera Micznik, “The Farewell Story of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 20/2 (1996): 144–166, 160.

113. Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 26.

114. Kramer, “As if a voice were in them’: Music, Narrative, and Deconstruction,” in *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 189.

115. Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trs. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28.

116. Kofi Agawu, “Rehearings: Tonal Strategy in the First Movement of Mahler’s Tenth Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 9/3 (1986): 222–233, 225.

117. Raymond Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler’s Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 146.

118. Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 19.

119. *Ibid.*, 147.

120. *Ibid.*, 151.

121. Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 137.

122. See Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1991), 52. The idea is taken from Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Plötzlichkeit: Zum Augenblick des ästhetischen Scheins* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

123. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Piper, 1986), 24.

124. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 44.

125. Letter to Max Marschalk, December 17, 1895; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 172.

126. La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*, Vol. 1, 785; cited by Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 192.

127. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 192.

128. Peter Revers, “... the heart-wrenching sound of farewell’: Mahler, Rückert, and the *Kindertotenlieder*,” trs. Irene Zedlacher, in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 173–183, 181.

129. Donald Mitchell, *Gustav Mahler*, Vol. 3: *Songs and Symphonies of Life and Death* (London: Faber, 1985), 191.

130. For Strauss’s criticism of this “weakness” and Mahler’s reply (July 19, 1894) see Herta Blaukopf, ed., *Gustav Mahler–Richard Strauss: Correspondence, 1888–1911*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (London: Faber, 1984), 37.

131. Bekker, *Gustav Mahlers Sinfonien*, 61.

132. James Buhler, "'Breakthrough' as Critique of Form: The Finale of Mahler's First Symphony," *19th-Century Music* 20/2 (1996): 125–143, 129.
133. *Ibid.*, 126.
134. Bernd Sponheuer quoted in Buhler, "'Breakthrough' as Critique of Form," 132.
135. Buhler, "'Breakthrough' as Critique of Form," 131.
136. For the use of the *messa di voce* figure in Mahler see Reinhold Kubik, "'Progress' and 'Tradition': Mahler's Revisions and Changing Performance Practice Conventions," in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 412.
137. See Thomas Peattie, "In Search of Lost Time: Memory and Mahler's Broken Pastoral," in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 185–198, 193. Peattie relates Mahler's treatment of time and memory to that of Marcel Proust.
138. See Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 3rd ed., ed. Donald Mitchell, trs. Basil Creighton (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 70.
139. Henry-Louis de La Grange refers to "parentheses, intrusions and interruptions" in Mahler's Seventh Symphony. "L'Enigme de la Septième," in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 25.
140. Monika Tibbe, *Über die Verwendung von Liedern und Liedelementen in instrumentalen Symphoniesätzen Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Emil Katzibichler, 1971), 74.
141. *Ibid.*, 89.
142. Tibbe identifies the trumpet fanfare "Abblasen" from the *Exercierreglement für die K. und. K. Fußtruppen* (Wien 1889). *Ibid.*, 216.
143. For a discussion of the idea and function of the *Naturlaut* see Eggebrecht, *Musik Gustav Mahlers*; Hermann Danuser, "Funktionen von Natur in der Musik Gustav Mahlers," *Oesterreichische Musikzeitschrift*, November 1988, 602–613, and *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1991); Julian Johnson, "Mahler and the Idea of Nature," in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 23–36.
144. Richard A. Kaplan, "Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Mahler," *Journal of Musicology* 14/2 (1996): 213–232, 221.
145. See Kaplan's diagram in "Temporal Fusion and Climax in the Symphonies of Mahler," 224.
146. *Ibid.*, 222.
147. Adorno, *Mahler*, 99. One place where the function of the march does receive due attention is Mathias Hansen, "Marsch und Formidee: Analytische Anmerkungen zu sinfonischen Sätzen Schuberts und Mahlers," in *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* 22 (1980): 3–23.
148. Eberhardt Klemm, "Über ein Spätwerk Gustav Mahlers," in *Gustav Mahler*, ed. Hermann Danuser, *Wege der Forschung*, Band 653 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 324–343, 325.
149. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 64.
150. Peter Davison, "Nachtmusik I: Sound and Symbol" in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 72.

## Chapter 7: Vienna, Modernism, and Modernity

1. The epigraph comes from Theodor Adorno, "Mahler," in *Quasi una Fantasia*, trs. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992), 98.

2. The term comes from Dahlhaus but is explored in Morten Solvik, “Mahler’s Untimely Modernism,” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 153–71, 153.

3. This was clearly a point of friction between Mahler and Alma from the start. He was dismissive of her literary tastes, which showed an acute awareness of literary modernism. The texts she chose for song settings were drawn from the same poets chosen by Strauss, Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, and Zemlinsky—that is, Richard Dehmel, Gustav Falke, Otto Julius Bierbaum, Rainer Maria Rilke.

4. Adorno, “Afterthoughts” (1961) to “Mahler,” in *Quasi una Fantasia*, 98.

5. William Ritter cited in Kurt Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. Inge Goodwin (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 162.

6. See Herta Blaukopf, “Die deutsche Romantik und Mahler,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium*, ed. James L. Zychowicz (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 1.

7. W. E. Yates, “Karl Kraus and the Remembrance of Things Past,” in *Karl Kraus in neuer Sicht*, ed. S. P. Scheichl and Edward Timms (Munich: Edition text + kritik, 1986), 80.

8. Charles S. Maier, “Mahler’s Theater: The Performative and the Political in Central Europe, 1890–1910,” in *Mahler and His World*, ed. Karen Painter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 55–85.

9. “The people lived in security, yet they were all afraid. I felt this through their cultivated form of living which was still derived from the Baroque; I painted them in their anxiety and pain.” Cited in Frank Whitford, *Expressionism* (London: Hamlyn, 1970), 156.

10. Marc Weiner draws out such a parallel in *Arthur Schnitzler and the Crisis of Musical Culture* (Heidelberg: C. Winter University Press, 1986). It is underlined in the case of Schnitzler’s character Georg von Wergenthin, who, Weiner argues, can be likened in certain ways to Mahler. *Ibid.*, 142–143.

11. Carl E. Schorske, “Mahler and Klimt: Social Experience and Artistic Evolution,” in *Beiträge ’79–81: Gustav Mahler Kolloquium 1979; Ein Bericht*, ed. Rudolf Klein (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981), 19.

12. Michael Steinberg, “Introduction” to Hermann Broch, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and His Time: The European Imagination, 1860–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 8.

13. Broch, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and His Time*, 65, 81, and 40.

14. Harry Zohn, *Karl Kraus* (New York: Twayne, 1971), 16.

15. Alban Berg regularly attended these performances.

16. Sigurd Paul Scheichl, “Der Stilbruch als Stilmittel bei Karl Kraus,” in Scheichl and Timms, *Karl Kraus in neuer Sicht*, 128–142, 142.

17. Michael Rogers, “Karl Kraus and the Creation of a Symbolic Language,” in Scheichl and Timms, *Karl Kraus in neuer Sicht*, 32–45, 37.

18. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4, *Prosa 4* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1960), 489–490; cited by Robert P. Morgan, “Ives and Mahler: Mutual Responses at the End of an Era,” *19th-Century Music* 2/1 (1978): 72–81, 80.

19. Yates, “Karl Kraus and the Remembrance of Things Past,” 137.

20. Henry-Louis de La Grange comments: “Mahler . . . does not seem to have been much impressed by *Elektra*, which Strauss apparently played for him on the piano at the end of

1906.” *Gustav Mahler, Vol. 3: Vienna; Triumph and Disillusion (1904–1907)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 556.

21. Fritz Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1901–1902), 3:358; cited by Gershon Weiler, *Mauthner’s Critique of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 34.

22. Mauthner, *Beiträge*, 1:544; cited by Weiler, *Mauthner’s Critique of Language*, 175.

23. Mauthner, *Beiträge*, 3:632; cited by Weiler, *Mauthner’s Critique of Language*, 295.

24. Rudolf Haller, *Questions on Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge, 1988), 62.

25. Mauthner, *Beiträge*, 3:634; cited by Weiler, *Mauthner’s Critique of Language*, 177.

26. Mauthner, *Beiträge*, 3:xi and 632; cited by Weiler, *Mauthner’s Critique of Language*, 294–295.

27. Max Kalbeck, *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, December 12, 1905; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 311.

28. The influence of Adolph Appia, particularly *La Mise en Scène du drame Wagnerien* (Paris, 1895) and *Die Musik und die Inszenierung* (Munich, 1899), was important here. Further productions with Roller included *Fidelio*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Iphigenie in Aulis*. See Paul Banks, “Mahler and Viennese Modernism,” in *On Mahler and Britten: Essays in Honour of Donald Mitchell on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Philip Read (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), 3–20.

29. Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; repr. 1997), 240.

30. Carl Schorske points out that after 1897 they nevertheless moved in overlapping circles. “Both frequented the house of Professor Zuckermandl, and both knew well his friends, the Nietzschean lawyer Max Burckhard, director of the Burgtheater and editor of *Ver Sacrum*.” *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 230.

31. Alma had a relationship with Klimt in the spring of 1899, when Klimt was thirty-five and Alma nineteen. Mahler thus had to move in the same circles as two former lovers of Alma’s—Klimt and Zemlinsky. She started lessons with the latter in October 1900 and was his lover by April 1901, seven months before she met Mahler at the Zuckermandl’s house.

32. Schorske, “Mahler and Klimt.”

33. From 1897 on, Klimt spent his summers on the Attersee (either with the Flöge family at Weissenbach or at Unterach, St. Agatha, or Kammer).

34. Altenberg’s opposition of “Ruhe-Idylle” and “irren, ehrgeizen, rastlos stupiden Weltgetümmel” makes use of the same key-word, “Weltgetümmel,” that appears in Mahler’s setting of “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen.” See W. G. Sebald, “*Le paysan de Vienne*: Über Peter Altenberg,” *Neue Rundschau* 100/1 (1989): 76.

35. Elsa Bienenfeld compared the first *Nachtmusik* of the Seventh to a painting by Segantini, drawn in a high mountain landscape. See *Neues Wiener Journal*, November 10, 1909; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 326. She thereby makes a fascinating link to Anton Webern, whose String Quartet movement of 1905 was apparently shaped by a Segantini triptych. See Julian Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 72–77.

36. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, 254.

37. Marc Weiner, *Undertones of Insurrection: Music, Politics, and the Social Sphere in the Modern German Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 75–76; cited by

K. M. Knittel, “Wagner, Deafness, and the Reception of Beethoven’s Late Style,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51/1 (1998): 49–82, 79.

38. Mahler complained about noise in several of his composing haunts. See, for example, his letter to Alma of June 14, 1909, from Toblach in *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, ed. Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, with Kund Martner, trs. and rev. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 2005), 319.

39. In her study of Wagner’s reception of Beethoven, K. M. Knittel shows that an inversion of the usual evaluation of Beethoven’s deafness was the key to the change in Wagner’s attitude toward Beethoven. Deafness became the source of his incomparable greatness because it inured him against the world, made him “deaf to the world” in every way, and thus utterly inward. “In the context of the momentous upheaval of German industrialization and all it entailed, Wagner’s romanticization of deafness is perhaps best understood as a nostalgia for a lost time. He surely longed not for literal loss of hearing but rather for solitude and isolation, an escape from modern existence.” “Wagner, Deafness, and the Reception of Beethoven’s Late Style,” 81.

40. Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler I: Die geistige Welt Gustav Mahlers in systematischer Darstellung*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1987), 16. “Alle Symphonien Mahlers sind Programmsymphonien.”

41. *Ibid.*, 9.

42. *Ibid.*, 10. Floros quotes Mahler’s letter to Max Kalbeck of January 1901: “From Beethoven onwards there is no modern music that has not its inner programme.” See *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Knud Martner (London: Faber, 1979), 262.

43. Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 10.

44. Derrick Puffett, “Berg, Mahler, and the Three Orchestral Pieces Op. 6,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Berg*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 111–144, 116.

45. See Walter Bailey, *Programmatic Elements in the Works of Schoenberg* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1984); Siglind Bruhn, ed., *Encrypted Messages in Alban Berg’s Music* (New York: Garland, 1998); Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*.

46. See Mahler’s letter to Emil Gutman of 1910, expressing his horror that any programs might be published in advance of the premiere of the Eighth Symphony. Herta Blaukopf, ed., *Mahler’s Unknown Letters*, trs. R. Stokes (London: Gollancz, 1986), 81.

47. “The Munich declaration of 1900 in no way indicated a ‘renunciation’ from program music and the artistic principles of his youth. They clearly demonstrated the desire not to give up the secret of his creations, namely the orientation to extramusical ideas, images and representations, but by way of suggestion.” Floros, *Gustav Mahler I*, 30.

48. Theodor Helm, *Pester Lloyd*, November 27, 1900. Similar observations were made by Eduard Hanslick about the performance of the First Symphony given in Vienna in 1900. *Neue Freie Presse*, November 20, 1900; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 292.

49. *New York Daily Tribune*, December 18, 1909, 7; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 314.

50. *New York Times*, December 17, 1909, 11; cited in Zoltan Roman, *Gustav Mahler’s American Years, 1907–1911: A Documentary History* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon, 1989), 311–312.

51. Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 209.

52. Letter to Arthur Seidl, February 17, 1897; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 205.

53. Letter to Max Marschalk, December 4, 1896; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 200.

54. Letter to Alma, May 22, 1906; in La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 233.

55. “All great religious and political movements can really have a beneficial effect only for a certain length of time. As a Jew Mahler could still find Christianity uplifting. As an old man, the hero Rich[ard] Wagner sank down to Mahler’s level once again as a result of Schopenhauer’s influence. It’s perfectly clear to me that the German nation can gain new strength only by breaking free from Christianity.... I intend to call my Alpine Symphony ‘Anti-Christ’, since it involves moral purification through one’s own effort, liberation through work and the adoration of eternal, glorious Nature.” Diary entry of Richard Strauss, May 1911; cited by Stephan Kohler in “Introduction” to score of Strauss’s *Alpine Symphony* (Edition Eulenberg).

56. Letter to Alma, August 16, 1906; in La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 236. Mahler’s closing phrase is an altered reference to a line from Lortzing’s opera *Zar und Zimmermann*.

57. Letter to Alma, January 10, 1907; in La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 255.

58. Letter to Alma, January 13, 1907; in *ibid.*, 258.

59. Letter to Alma, February 1, 1904; in *ibid.*, 146.

60. Letter to Max Marschalk, April 12, 1896; in Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 186.

61. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 92.

62. Dominique Jameux, “L’École de Vienne face à la VIIème Symphonie de Gustav Mahler,” in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 129.

63. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, December 17, 1907; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 238.

64. *Ibid.*, 237.

65. Peter Revers, “...the heart-wrenching sound of farewell’: Mahler, Rückert, and the *Kindertotenlieder*,” trs. Irene Zedlacher, in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 173–183, 179.

66. John Williamson, “Mahler and the Episodic Structure: The First Movement of the Seventh Symphony,” in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 37, but also 39, n. 24.

67. Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 188.

68. Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler*, repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 46.

69. Jameux, “L’École de Vienne face à la VIIème Symphonie de Gustav Mahler,” 130.

70. For a discussion of the genesis of this work see Bailey, *Programmatic Elements in the works of Arnold Schoenberg*.

71. See Natalie Bauer-Lechner for an account of Mahler’s plan for a performance of the *St Matthew Passion* with two separate orchestras (one on the left, one on the right), two choirs, plus a third (the congregation) placed somewhere else, plus a boys choir in the organ loft “so that their voices would seem to come from heaven.” Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections of Gustav Mahler*, ed. Peter Franklin, trs. Dika Newlin (London: Faber, 1980), 123.

72. Webern played the celesta part in the premiere of the Eighth Symphony in 1910.

73. Ernst Decsey recalls that Mahler spoke of Rosegger as “the greatest poet of our time.” See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 204. Antony Beaumont further

notes that Mahler traveled with Rosegger on a train journey with Strauss from Vienna to Graz in June 1905.

74. See Johnson, *Webern and the Transformation of Nature*.

75. Derrick Puffett, “Berg, Mahler, and the Three Orchestral Pieces Op. 6,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Berg*, ed. Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 121. Puffett points out an intertextual reference in mm. 40–41 to the *Schwerer Kondukt* of Mahler’s Ninth, which Berg referred to as “death in armour” in a letter to his wife Helene. *Ibid.*, 127.

76. *Ibid.*, 122. This comparison is developed in more detail in Hans Redlich, *Alban Berg: The Man and His Music* (London: J. Calder, 1957), 71.

77. Puffett, “Berg, Mahler and the Three Orchestral Pieces, Op. 6,” 122.

78. Douglas Jarman, *The Music of Alban Berg* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 177.

79. George Perle, *The Operas of Alban Berg, Vol. 1: Wozzeck* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 18.

80. Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1991), 85–86.

81. The term derives from Hans Redlich’s use of it in “Mahler’s Wirkung in Zeit und Raum,” *Musikblätter der Anbruch* 12/3 (1930): 92–96, 95.

82. Peter Franklin, “Mahler,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:614.

83. Theodor Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York: Continuum, 1989), 211.

84. William J. McGrath, “Mahler and Freud: The Dream of the Stately House,” in Klein, *Gustav Mahler Kolloquium 1979*, 40–51, 45. This song is also quoted by Brahms in the *Academic Festival Overture*. Ernst Krenek pointed out that “the opening motive of the *Third Symphony* is literally identical with the first phrase of a marching song which all Austrian school children used to sing.” See Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler*, trs. James Galston (New York: Da Capo, 1970), 193.

85. Much has been made of the fact that, for a short distance, Mahler marched in the May Day Parade in Vienna in May 1905, but it is clear that after his student association with the Pernerstorfer Circle he ceased to have any active involvement in politics. Engelbert Pernerstorfer and Viktor Adler, important friends of Mahler’s youth, went on to become founding figures of Austrian socialism.

86. Peter Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 80.

87. Henry-Louis de La Grange, “Music about Music in Mahler: Reminiscences, Allusions, or Quotations?” in *Mahler Studies*, ed. Stephen E. Hefling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 125.

88. Cf. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 35. Raymond Knapp suggests that the musical materials of the third movement similarly display “significant class-based differences in the two poetic sources,” distinguishing between the aristocratic and elevated tone of the horns and post horn and the peasant sensibility of the folk song, which is excluded by the former’s moments of elevation. *Symphonic Metamorphoses: Subjectivity and Alienation in Mahler’s Re-Cycled Songs* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), 142.

89. Kurt Blaukopf insists that “there is no evidence of any direct political commitment on Mahler’s part.” *Gustav Mahler*, 192.

90. Julius Korngold, *Neue Freie Presse*, December 9, 1911; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 244.
91. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 5, 1909; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 246.
92. Cited in Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 21.
93. Maximilian Muntz, *Deutsche Zeitung*, December 14, 1905; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 244–245.
94. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 40. She reports Mahler's words about the Third Symphony thus: "Straight away, I need a regimental band to give the rough and crude effect of my martial comrade's arrival. It will be just like the military band on parade. Such a mob is milling around, you never saw anything like it!"
95. Franklin, "Mahler," 619.
96. Franklin, *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 38.
97. Ibid.
98. "The presence of heterogeneous material in his music can be at least partly explained by his living in an infinitely rich, polyglot, multiracial, multicultural, and multinational society, the Vienna of 1900." La Grange, "Music about Music in Mahler, 137.
99. Herta Blaukopf, "The Young Mahler, 1875–1880," in Hefling, *Mahler Studies*, 3.
100. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 196.
101. Löhr's reminiscence of a trip with Mahler to his parental home in 1884 may have been conditioned by looking back from 1923. Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 393.
102. Franklin, "Mahler," 603.
103. Raymond Knapp, relating Mahler to the film *Sybil* (1976), that he "took refuge in a kind of cultural MPD [Multiple Personality Disorder], alternating antithetical attitudes that were, individually, indelibly inscribed upon his psyche, yet never truly integrated." *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 73.
104. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 54 and 82.
105. Lectures given by Webern were posthumously reconstructed from the notes of his pupils and published as *Wege zur neuen Musik*, ed. Willi Reich (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1960); trs. Leo Black as *The Path to the New Music* (London: Theodore Presser, 1963).
106. This performance, it should be noted, had been planned before Mahler's arrival. See Sandra McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna, 1896–1897: Critically Moving Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 88–89.
107. Herta Blaukopf suggests there is no evidence that Mahler ever understood Czech. "Gustav Mahlers Sprache," in Read, *On Mahler and Britten*, 21–31, 22.
108. See Ian Horsbrugh, *Leoš Janáček* (Newton Abbot, U.K.: David & Charles, 1981), 38. Janáček was educated in German, and such was the marginalization of the Czech language that in later life he attended evening classes at the Moravian Academy in Brno to improve his Czech. The self-conscious effort he had to make to learn "his own language" parallels his protracted difficulties in finding his own compositional voice in the realm of an art music dominated by distinctly Austro-German grammar and intonation.
109. "The towns of Bohemia and Moravia were German islands in a sea of Czech peasantry." Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938*, 141.
110. Weiler, *Mauthner's Critique of Language*, 332.
111. Bauer-Lechner, *Recollections*, 27.



112. Alfred [sic] Casella, “Gustav Mahler et sa deuxième symphonie,” *S.I.M., Revue musicale mensuelle*, 6, no. 4 (April 1910): 240–241; cited in *Mahler: A Documentary Study*, ed. Kurt Blaukopf (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 264.

113. Guido Adler, *Der Stil in der Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911), 42; cited in Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit*, 80.

114. *New York Daily Tribune*, April 30, 1910, pt. 5, p. 2; cited in Roman, *Gustav Mahler’s American Years, 1907–1911*, 367.

115. Roman, *Gustav Mahler’s American Years, 1907–1911*, xviii.

116. Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938*, 169.

117. Steinberg, “Introduction,” 3.

118. *Ibid.*, 151.

119. *Prager Tagblatt*, September 20, 1908; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 322.

120. Jon W. Finson, “The Reception of Gustav Mahler’s *Wunderhorn-Lieder*,” *Journal of Musicology* 5/1 (1987): 91–116.

121. *Ibid.*, 101.

122. Franklin, “Mahler,” 615.

123. La Grange, “Music about Music in Mahler,” 141.

124. Alma insisted that Mahler’s conversion was not opportunistic—“Er war christusgläubig”—and reports that he seldom passed a church without going in. “Aber seine Devotion erregte meinen Widerspruch. Er liebte auch zutiefst den katholischen Mystizismus. Ich war oppositionell dem christgläubigen Juden gegenüber—damals!” See Alma Mahler-Werfel, *Mein Leben* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1960), 28.

125. Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938*, 207.

126. McColl, *Music Criticism in Vienna*, 101.

127. See Blaukopf, *Mahler’s Unknown Letters*, 55.

128. See La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 245.

129. Letter to Alma, March 31, 1903; in *ibid.*, 114.

130. Letter to Alma, April 2, 1903; in *ibid.*, 118.

131. Letter to Alma, October 22, 1907; in *ibid.*, 284.

132. Peter Franklin cites a review of the Third Symphony by Alex Winterberger (November 1904 in the *Leipzig Neuste Nachrichten*) of Mahler’s “oriental symphony” (i.e., Jewish)—a work of “tragico-fantastic ballet music” (i.e., appealing to a popular audience and not living up to the structural demands of the Austro-German symphony). *Mahler: Symphony No. 3*, 29.

133. *New York Times*, November 30, 1908, 9; cited in Roman, *Gustav Mahler’s American Years, 1907–1911*, 170. Guido Adler also underlined that while as a younger conductor Mahler was exaggerated in his movements and physical appearance, in later years he was more restrained. Adler, *Gustav Mahler*, 46.

134. Neville Cardus, *Gustav Mahler: His Mind and His Music*, vol. 1 (London: Gollancz, 1972), 23.

135. David Schiff, “Jewish and Musical Tradition in the Music of Mahler and Schoenberg,” *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 9/2 (1986): 217–231, 218–219.

136. Vladimír Karbusický, “Gustav Mahler’s Jewishness,” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 195 and 201.

137. Karbusický insists that Brod (1961) and Gradenwitz (1961) both underline the Jewish element in the third movement of the Third but have been roundly ignored.

138. Karbusický, “Gustav Mahler’s Musical Jewishness,” 209.
139. Bernstein and the Vienna Philharmonic, recorded on Deutsche Gramophon (CD 423 608-2), at a live performance in Frankfurt in 1987.
140. See the Uri Caine Ensemble, *Gustav Mahler in Toblach: I Went Out This Morning over the Countryside*, new ed. (Winter and Winter, 1998), CD 910 046-2.
141. Karbusický, “Gustav Mahler’s Musical Jewishness,” 199. He relates the open 5ths motif in the Finale of the Second to the *shofar*—the ram’s-horn trumpet associated with Rosh Hashanah. Karbusický cites an article by Ludwig Landau, “The Jewish Element in Gustav Mahler: On the 25th Anniversary of His Death—18 May 1936,” which points to a “heightened religious feeling” indicative of Hasidic intensity in the Eighth Symphony, that is, the very work supposedly indicative of Mahler’s German credentials. The repetition of “ewig” in Part 2 of the Eighth and in “Der Abschied,” Landau suggests, is “like a Hasidim bidding farewell to the earth with the long-echoing word of the Jewish faith, ‘echad.” Ibid., 209–210.
142. Rudolf Louis, *Die deutsche Musik der Gegenwart* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1909), 182; cited by Karbusický, “Gustav Mahler’s Musical Jewishness,” 204.
143. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *L’ironie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1964).
144. Talia Pecker Berio, “‘Ailleurs’: Gustav Mahler et l’ironie de la Diaspora,” in *Gustav Mahler et l’ironie dans la culture Viennoise au tournant du siècle*, ed. André Castagné, Michel Chalon, and Patrick Forençon (Castelnau-le-Lez: Éditions Climats, 2001), 46. See also Pecker Berio, “Mahler’s Jewish Parable,” in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 87–110.
145. Talia Pecker Berio, “Perspectives of a Scherzo,” in Zychowicz, *Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler*, 74.
146. Knapp, *Symphonic Metamorphoses*, 119.
147. Francesca Draughon and Raymond Knapp, “Gustav Mahler and the Crisis of Jewish Identity,” *ECHO* 3/2 (Fall 2001): 19.
148. Paul Rosenfeld, *Musical Portraits: Interpretations of Twenty Modern Composers* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co, Ltd., 1922), 206–209, 215–216, 220–221.
149. Draughon and Knapp, “Gustav Mahler and the Crisis of Jewish Identity,” 28.
150. Robert Hirschfeld, *Wiener Abendpost*, November 5, 1909; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 248.
151. Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938*, 106.
152. Ibid., 107.
153. Franklin, “Mahler,” 622. Karen Painter points out that the premiere of the Eighth Symphony, more than any other work, “provoked discussion of Mahler’s ethnicity.” “Jewish Identity and Anti-Semitic Critique in the Austro-German Reception of Mahler, 1900–1945,” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 175–194, 177.
154. Martner, *Selected Letters of Gustav Mahler*, 27.
155. Cited in Kurt Blaukopf, *Gustav Mahler*, 232.
156. “Innere Vielfältigkeit...ist das absolute Jüdische.” Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Vienna, 1903, 1919), 427–432; cited in Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938*, 224.

## Chapter 8: Performing Authenticity

1. Sources for the epigraphs are as follows: cited in Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Mahler, Vol. I* (London: Gollancz, 1974), 400; cited in La Grange, *Gustav Mahler*,

Vol. 3: *Vienna; Triumph and Disillusion (1904–1907)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 69; cited in Karen Painter, ed., *Mahler and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 305; cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 282 (Richard Specht, trying to capture his impression of the extraordinary contradictions exhibited by Mahler, summed up the composer as a case of “Lucifer and Angel in the same person”; see *Gustav Mahler* [Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1913], 28); cited in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 368; cited by Sandra McColl, “Max Kalbeck and Gustav Mahler,” *19th-Century Music* 20/2 (1996): 167–184, 169; Aaron Copland, *Our New Music* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1941), 31 (repr. in *Copland on Music* [New York: Doubleday, 1960], 111); cited by Deryck Cooke in *Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to His Music* (London: Faber, 1980), 80.

2. Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trs. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 16 and 13.

3. Hans Pfitzner, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 4 (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1987), 691; cited by John Williamson, “Mahler and Pfitzner: A Parallel Development,” in *On Mahler and Britten: Essays in Honour of Donald Mitchell on His Seventieth Birthday* ed. Philip Reed (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), 119–131, 123. Williamson gives the phrase as “he is subjectively sincere and objectively dishonest.”

4. This is highlighted in retrospect by Berg’s use of the Heuriger band in *Wozzeck*.

5. “The central point of Mahler reception is seen in the specific language-character of his music—in its ‘tone.’” Thomas Schäfer, *Modellfall Mahler: Kompositorische Rezeption in zeitgenössischer Musik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1999), 321. Neville Cardus suggested of Mahler’s music that “it is the fervent, frequently exalted sound of his voice, not always what he says, that persuades us.” *Gustav Mahler: His Mind and His Music*, vol. 1 (London: Gollancz, 1972), 23.

6. Letter to Alma, October 14, 1904; in *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, ed. Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss, with Knud Martner, trs. and rev. Antony Beaumont (London: Faber, 2005), 179.

7. Leon Botstein, “Whose Gustav Mahler? Reception, Interpretation, and History,” in Painter, *Mahler and His World*, 4. David Pickett charts the progress of Mahler renaissance in recording after the 1960 centenary. Complete cycles of the symphonies were recorded by Bernstein (1960–1967), Solti (1961–1971), Haitink (1962–1971), and Kubelik (1967–1971). “Mahler on Record: The Spirit or the Letter?” in *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, ed. Jeremy Barham (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 345–377. Pickett notes that (in 2004) “about two thousand recordings have already been made of Mahler’s symphonies.” *Ibid.*, 371.

8. This contrasts with the bulk of scholarly work on key modernist figures that, until recently, has been largely analytical.

9. Botstein, “Whose Gustav Mahler? Reception, Interpretation, and History,” 3.

10. *Ibid.*, 19.

11. *Ibid.*, 24.

12. David B. Greene, *Mahler, Consciousness, and Temporality* (New York: Gordon & Breach, 1984), 37.

13. *Ibid.*, 39.

14. Jens Malte Fischer, *Gustav Mahler: Der fremde Vertraute* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2003).

15. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, eds., *Gustav Mahler: Der unbekannte Bekannte* (Munich: Edition text + kritik, 1996).

16. Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 176.
17. *Ibid.*, 145.
18. *Ibid.*, 154.
19. Gilbert Kaplan, “Adagietto: ‘From Mahler with Love,’” in Barham, *Perspectives on Gustav Mahler*, 379–400, 388.
20. Paul Banks, “Aspects of Mahler’s Fifth Symphony: Performance Practice and Interpretation,” *Musical Times* 130 (May 1989): 258–265, 261.
21. An excellent example of the change in meaning according to performance is given by Gilbert Kaplan, “Adagietto: ‘From Mahler with Love,’” 391–392.
22. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trs. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 2.
23. Peter Franklin, “Mahler,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 15:614.
24. Schäfer, *Modellfall Mahler*, 126.
25. Sources for the epigraphs are as follows: Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xix; Guido Adler, *Gustav Mahler*, repr. and trs. in Edward R. Reilly, *Gustav Mahler and Guido Adler: Records of a Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 18; Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trs. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 85; Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, trs. David Magarshack (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Classics, 1981), 93.
26. Ernst Behler, *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 74.
27. *Ibid.*, 83–84.
28. Cited in Behler, *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity*, 84.
29. See Anthony Newcomb, “Schumann and Late-Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies,” *19th-Century Music* 11/2 (Fall 1987): 164–174; Julian Johnson, “Narrative Strategies in Hoffmann and Schumann,” in *Resounding Concerns*, ed. Rudiger Görner (Munich: Iudicium, 2003), 55–70; Erica Reiman, *Schumann’s Piano Cycles and the Novels of Jean Paul* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2004).
30. Behler: *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity*, 89.
31. *Ibid.*, 102.
32. Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 214.
33. *Ibid.*, 222.
34. Adler, *Gustav Mahler*, 29.
35. Eberhardt Klemm, “Über ein Spätwerk Gustav Mahlers,” in *Gustav Mahler*, ed. Hermann Danuser, *Wege der Forschung*, Band 653 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 324–343. “Allen großen Spätwerke tendieren zum Fragmentarischen, lassen die Idee des runden, geschlossenen Kunstwerkes hinter sich.” *Ibid.*, 329.
36. Alma Schindler, diary entry for Friday November 29, 1901; in La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 44.
37. See Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, third movement, at Fig. 13 (m. 326); the marking is *Sehr zart und innig*. In the fourth movement of the Fifth Symphony (at Fig. 4) the marking is *mit innigster Empfindung*, and in Part 2 of the Eighth Symphony (at Fig. 178) Dr. Marianus

is marked *zart*, *aber innig*. The marking is more common in the songs; see for example, the *Rückert Lieder*, nos. 2 and 4.

38. Examples in Schumann's piano music include the second of the *Davidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6, the first of the *Phantasiestücke*, Op. 12, the second of the *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, and the section following the Intermezzo of the *Humoreske*, Op. 20.

39. The Adagio voice is a key category for Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht. What he calls "Das Adagio-Schöne" stands against the music of the world, but whereas the *Naturlaut* is objective, the Adagio voice is hypersubjective. *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers* (Munich: Piper, 1986), 25–26.

40. Comparing the second subject of the first movement of the Sixth with the "coercive march" that precedes it, Peter Franklin comments that this theme "functions rhetorically as a subjective mode, urgently insistent upon its superior claim to authenticity." "Mahler," 620. One might add to this that the unmediated opposition of the two, separated only by a short chorale transition, highlights their constructive and rhetorical aspect.

41. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, in *The Bakhtin Reader*, ed. Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 116.

42. Of this latter example, see the discussion in Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 147.

43. Theodor Schmitt differentiates between slow "intermezzo" movements (1/3, 2/2, 3/2, 5/4, and 7/4) and grand slow movements (3/6, 4/3, 6/3, 9/4, and 10/1). *Der langsame Symphoniesatz Gustav Mahlers: Historische vergleichende Studien zu Mahlers Kompositionstechnik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1983).

44. Margaret Notley, "Late-Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio," *19th-Century Music* 23/1 (1999): 3–61, 34.

45. Notley quotes Richard Pohl: "Scherzo Laune haben wir zur Genüge—aber keine Adagio Tiefe mehr." See "Die Kammermusik der letzten drei Jahrhunderte" in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (1890), 541; cited by Notley, "Late-Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio," 34.

46. Arthur Seidl, *Vom Musikalisch-Erhabenen: Prolegomena zur Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Leipzig, 1887); cited by Notley, "Late-Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio," 36.

47. This summary by Notley (*ibid.*, 38) is drawn from Ernst Kurth, *Romantische Harmonik und ihre Krise in Wagners "Tristan"*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: M. Hesse, 1923), 453–462.

48. This was first published in installments in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* (1873–1882) and then in book version as *Beethovens Streichquartette: Versuch eine technischen Analyse dieser Werke im Zusammenhange mit ihrem geistigen Gehalt* (Leipzig 1885; 2nd ed., 1910; 3rd ed., 1921). The citation is from 214 (41 in Notley, "Late-Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio"). K. M. Knittel says that Helm's book was "a direct response to Wagner." "Wagner, Deafness, and the Reception of Beethoven's Late Style," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51/1 (1998): 49–82.

49. Stephen E. Hefling, "Mahler: Symphonies 1–4," in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 369–416, 397.

50. Rudolf Stephan, "Zum Thema, Bruckner und Mahler," in *Beiträge '79–81: Gustav Mahler Kolloquium 1979; Ein Bericht*, ed. Rudolf Klein (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981), 76–83, 83. Also, Eberhardt Klemm: "Das Adagio der Zehnten ist voller Reminiszenzen an Bruckner,

genauer: an die langsamen Sätze seiner Siebenten und Neunten Sinfonie.” See “Über ein Spätwerk Gustav Mahlers,” 330.

51. The slow movement of Bruckner’s Fifth Symphony (*Adagio. Sehr langsam*) begins with a pizzicato bass but leads to an intense string lyricism marked by the turn figure, which anticipates the Finale of Mahler’s Ninth, not least in its binary opposition of a simple two-part texture and rich homophony.

52. In this respect, the scene in Visconti’s film *Death in Venice* (1971), in which Aschenbach plays through the opening of Mahler’s Adagietto at the piano, is insightful.

53. Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz*, 133.

54. A distant ancestor is the oboe cadenza in the recapitulation of the first movement of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.

55. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 20.

56. The epigraph comes from Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of “As If,”* 2nd ed., trs. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935); originally published in German in 1911. Mahler would almost certainly not have come across Vaihinger, just as he would not have come across Fritz Mauthner either, yet his own work runs parallel to and sometimes overlaps theirs.

57. “Er war Kindhaft.” See Alma Mahler-Wefel, *Mein Leben* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1960), 32. The context of her remark is the complaint that he was by nature a celibate, afraid of women and sexuality.

58. Shostakovich owes much to Mahler in this regard and is similarly ambivalent.

59. Schmitt, *Der langsame Symphoniesatz*, 22–23.

60. Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, 83.

61. Hermann Danuser, *Gustav Mahler und seine Zeit* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1991),

86. Hans Redlich used the term in “Mahler’s Wirkung in Zeit und Raum,” *Musikblätter der Anbruch* 12/3 (1930): 92–96, 95.

62. Eggebrecht, *Die Musik Gustav Mahlers*, 24–25.

63. Federico Celestini, *Die Unordnung der Dinge: Das musikalische Grotteske in der Wiener Moderne (1885–1914)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 84.

64. James L. Zychowicz, “Ein schlechter Jasager: Considerations on the Finale to Mahler’s Seventh Symphony,” in *The Seventh Symphony of Gustav Mahler: A Symposium* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music, 1990), 98–106.

65. Martin Scherzinger, “The Finale of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony: A Deconstructive Reading,” *Music Analysis* 14/1 (1995): 69–88, 75.

66. *Ibid.*, 85.

67. James Buhler, “‘Breakthrough’ as Critique of Form: The Finale of Mahler’s First Symphony,” *19th-Century Music* 20/2 (1996): 125–143, 130.

68. *Ibid.*, 130.

69. The ambivalence of expression and irony is nicely caught in a contradiction of performance markings in the published score of the Ninth Symphony. In bar 49 of the Finale, 1st Violins are marked “molto espress,” whereas the Violas, who double the same line, are marked “ohne Ausdruck.”

70. Letter to Alma, June 22, 1909, from Toblach; in La Grange and Weiss, *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, 326–327.

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DropBooks

# Index

- Abbate, Carolyn, 17, 33, 57, 167, 179, 190,  
217–18, 290n15, 296n25, 297n31, 309n1,  
322n11, 334n42
- absent voices, 7, 29, 48, 70, 71–72, 84–85, 98,  
141, 169, 215, 236, 278
- Adagio voice, 29–31, 69, 128, 193, 246, 272–82,  
334n39
- Adam, Adolphe, 156
- Adler, Felix, 202
- Adler, Guido, 25, 69–70, 98, 133, 173, 202,  
243, 250–51, 254, 269, 294n79, 296n21,  
300n41, 304n61, 308n115, 312n51, 314n81,  
317n2, 330n133
- Adler, Viktor, 254, 328n85
- Adorno, Theodor, 27–28, 48, 111, 124, 168,  
179, 194, 216, 218–19, 225–26, 228–29,  
232, 234, 242, 245–49, 264, 266, 269, 282,  
284–85, 309n1, 310n6  
on music as language-like, 19, 155, 164, 167,  
170–71, 195–96, 215, 217, 240
- Agawu, Kofi, 217, 293n55, 311n29
- Alewyn, Richard, 206, 209
- alienation, 27, 46, 114, 169, 207, 211, 227, 230,  
236, 246, 260, 290n18, 296n25, 300n42
- Altenberg, Peter, 201, 229, 231, 237, 325n34
- angels, 32, 69–70, 123, 133
- Angerer, Manfred, 301n9
- anticipation, 71, 85, 127, 168, 192, 216, 218–19,  
223–24
- anti-Semitism, 104, 251, 255–56, 258–60, 266,  
305n71, 330n132
- Appia, Adolph, 325n28
- aria, 17, 25, 153, 165, 168, 171, 217, 264, 291n27
- Arnim, Achim von, 105–6, 255
- artifice/artificiality, 5, 93–99, 101–3, 106–7,  
112–14, 119, 157, 203, 206, 218, 220,  
264–66, 269–70, 272, 278, 282–84, 287  
“as if” (*als ob*), 71–72, 164, 240, 247, 282–88
- Attersee, 52, 243, 325n33. *See also*  
Salzkammergut
- Auber, Daniel, 156
- authenticity, 5, 29, 42, 93, 98, 102, 105–7,  
113–15, 133, 145, 152, 157, 169, 211, 231–32,  
263–88, 334n40
- authorial intrusion, 130, 134, 206, 217, 272
- autobiography, 20, 42, 94–95, 128–29, 160,  
204, 239, 247, 266–67, 289n3
- autonomous music (absolute music), 18,  
23–24, 98, 116, 154, 185–87, 190, 192, 195,  
229, 240, 270, 282–83
- Avenarius, Ferdinand, 201
- Bach, Johann Sebastian, 5, 25, 37, 40, 116, 127,  
139, 151, 153–54, 156, 161, 181, 277, 300n41,  
308n118, 327n71
- Badeni ordinances, 252
- Bahr, Hermann, 202, 263–64
- Bailey, Walter, 326n45, 327n70
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, 47, 130–34, 141, 166–67,  
196–98, 250, 272
- ballads, 6, 10, 106, 167–70, 217, 310n16, 312n52
- ballet, 156–57, 182–84, 192, 214–15, 308n112,  
314n84
- Balzac, Honoré de, 198, 244, 302n19
- banality, 6, 98, 120, 129, 165, 197, 209, 232, 238,  
259, 283, 299n26
- Banks, Paul, 268, 307n96, 325n28
- Barford, Philip, 306n92
- Barham, Jeremy, 318n35
- Barthes, Roland, 3
- Batka, Richard, 116, 152, 255
- Bauer, Otto, 254
- Bauer-Lechner, Natalie, 3, 37, 47–48, 95, 125,  
128–29, 132, 135, 137, 153, 155, 157–58,  
167, 172, 200, 250, 253, 298n14, 327n71,  
329n94

- Baumbach, Rudolf, 298n10  
 Beaumont, Antony, 156, 327n73  
 Bechstein, Ludwig, 290n11, 312n52  
 Beckett, Samuel, 233, 288  
 Beer-Hofmann, Richard, 254  
 Beethoven, Ludwig van, 5, 20, 22–23, 72, 88,  
   94, 119, 124–25, 133, 141, 153, 156–57, 164,  
   183, 186, 189, 192–94, 214, 237–38, 242,  
   259, 264, 273–77, 282, 287, 301n5, 326n39,  
   326n42, 335n54  
   chamber music, 153, 273–74, 304n55  
   *Eroica* Symphony, 258  
   *Fidelio*, 153, 219, 305n77  
   Ninth Symphony, 5, 23–26, 115–16, 133, 160,  
     166, 180, 182, 189–92, 273, 278, 289n8,  
     292nn41–42, 292n44, 300n35, 316n117  
   piano sonatas, 153, 274–77, 296n23  
 Beethoven Exhibition (1902), 235, 289n8  
 Beethoven Prize, 10, 290n10  
 Behler, Ernst, 269–70  
 Behn, Hermann, 301n3  
 Bekker, Paul, 22–23, 118, 125, 146, 152, 159, 210,  
   213, 219, 300n44, 321n103  
 Beller, Stephen, 255, 260–61  
 bells, 48, 53–54, 69–70, 92, 119, 133, 193,  
   297n29  
   cowbells, 54, 57, 70, 212, 223  
   sleigh bells, 184, 215  
 Berg, Alban, 230, 238–39, 242, 245–46  
   Altenberg Lieder, 242  
   *Lulu*, 230  
   Three Pieces for Orchestra, 246  
   Violin Concerto, 245  
   *Wozzeck*, 104–5, 106, 114, 144, 149, 230,  
     332n4  
 Berio, Luciano, *Sinfonia*, 268–69  
 Berlin, 69, 184, 186, 241, 291n32  
 Berliner, Arnold, 157, 292n43  
 Berlioz, Hector, 27–28, 147, 160–61, 164,  
   174, 181, 190, 192–93, 195, 203, 230, 277,  
   294n79, 296n22, 314n76  
   *Benvenuto Cellini*, 131  
   *La Damnation de Faust*, 192  
   *Grande Symphonie funèbre et*  
     *triomphale*, 39  
   *Harold en Italie*, 160, 161, 192  
   *Lélio*, 160–61, 192  
   Orchestral Songs, 166  
   Requiem, 39  
   *Roméo et Juliette*, 160, 192–93  
   *Symphonie Fantastique*, 144, 160–61, 192,  
     224, 239–40, 285  
   *Les Troyens*, 193  
 Bernstein, Leonard, 257–58  
 Bethge, Hans, *Die chinesische Flöte*, 106, 245,  
   299n22  
 Bie, Oskar, 263–64  
 Bienenfeld, Elsa, 120, 153, 306n81, 325n35  
 Bierbaum, Otto, 201, 241, 319n48  
 Binzer, August von, 247–48  
 biography, 3–4, 94, 152–53, 185, 205–6,  
   249–50, 254  
 birdsong, 7, 48–49, 51, 53–54, 57, 61–69,  
   168, 188  
 Bizet, Georges, 306n86, 306n93  
 Blaukopf, Herta, 172, 249, 320n82,  
   329n107  
 Blaukopf, Kurt, 153, 171, 173, 195, 198, 243,  
   298n12, 306n82, 311n32, 328n89  
 Blessinger, Karl, 266  
 Bloom, Harold, 269  
 Bode, Karl, 105  
 Böhme, Jakob, 202  
 Bonds, Mark Evan, 189, 302n16  
 Botstein, Leon, 198, 265–66, 268, 318n27  
 Boulez, Pierre, 145, 174, 189, 195  
 Bouwman, Frans, 309n133  
 Brahms, Johannes, 100, 119, 133, 141, 151, 153,  
   168, 186, 189, 195, 251, 290n10, 298n7,  
   319n53, 328n84  
 breaking of the voice, 45, 87, 234, 304n49  
 breaking out of the voice, 6, 13, 79, 81, 83,  
   120, 224  
 breakthrough, 85, 127, 211–12, 216, 218–19,  
   223, 286. See also *Durchbruch*  
 Brecht, Bertholt, 106  
 Brentano, Clemens, 105–6, 255  
 Breuer, Josef, 233  
 Britten, Benjamin, 238  
 Broch, Hermann, 231, 254  
 Brno, 252  
 Brod, Max, 179, 257  
 Bruckner, Anton, 23, 32, 48, 133, 141, 151,  
   153–54, 156, 159, 172, 195, 257, 261,  
   273–74, 277, 281, 294n79, 298n13, 305n75,  
   306n87, 334n50, 335n51  
 Brueghel, Pieter, 128  
 Bruhn, Siglind, 326n45

- brutality, 6, 13, 27, 38, 90, 105, 189, 191–92, 225–26, 266
- Budapest, 48, 185–86, 253, 262, 314n88
- Buhler, James, 146, 219, 286
- Bülöw, Hans von, 159
- Burckhard, Max, 325n30
- Busoni, Ferruccio, 308n125
- Caine, Uri, 258
- calling forth a voice, 13, 41–70, 83, 92–93, 113, 115, 124, 181, 245
- Callot, Jacques, 203
- cantata, 5, 10, 13, 17, 25, 31, 153, 160, 173, 192, 245
- Cardus, Neville, 28, 257, 332n5
- carnavalesque, 5, 94, 101, 113, 125–34, 210–11, 259, 272, 303n40
- Casella, Alfredo, 253
- catastrophe, 87, 90, 193, 196, 219, 301n45
- Celestini, Federico, 98, 125, 129, 140–41, 192, 198–200, 205, 209, 240, 285
- Cervantes, Miguel de, 202, 282
- chamber music, 37, 100, 119, 289n6, 298n7
- character pieces, 124, 161, 192, 243
- character voices, 5, 6, 41, 100–101, 106, 126, 168–70, 172, 180, 182–83, 187, 195, 214, 310n6
- Charpentier, Gustave, *Louise*, 243
- childlike voice, 5, 6, 70, 79, 106, 112, 115, 131, 133, 135, 157, 170, 172, 184–85, 197, 214–15, 232, 265, 283, 304n49
- Chopin, Frédéric, 132
- chorale, 17, 25, 31, 52, 116, 118, 183, 188–89, 192–93, 210, 217–19, 258, 277, 285, 291n27
- choral music, 55, 65, 153–54, 189, 192, 244, 277
- chromaticism, 6, 21, 65, 79, 95, 211, 220, 281
- Classicism, 106–15, 186, 211, 229, 273–74, 277, 281
- cliché, 61, 129, 145, 172, 232, 265
- coalescence, 20, 48–49, 181, 216
- collapse, 70, 85, 112, 114, 142, 183, 211, 216, 230
- collective voices, 6, 20–21, 26–28, 29–30, 55–56, 69, 104–5, 115, 118, 141, 144, 193, 198, 200, 225–26, 246, 281, 300n42
- comedy, 128, 133, 145, 248
- commedia del arte*, 128, 131, 270
- Cone, Edward, 3, 5, 14
- containment, 90–92, 210–11, 236
- Cooke, Deryck, 70, 88, 92, 115, 120, 136, 300n38
- Copland, Aaron, 160, 264–65
- cyclic form, 87, 119, 180
- Czech identity, 13, 30, 128–29, 175, 249–255, 290n17, 329nn107–8
- Dahlhaus, Carl, 228, 261, 264–65, 268, 324n2
- dance forms, 19, 21, 57, 129–32, 141–42, 145, 165, 170, 203, 216, 244, 257
- Danuser, Hermann, 22, 71, 213, 218, 246–47, 254, 284, 317n3, 323n143
- Dargie, Mary, 302nn12–13, 311n24
- Davison, Peter, 227, 300n44, 306n86, 320n82
- death, 71–83, 297n34
- Debussy, Claude, 39, 254
- Decsey, Ernst, 173, 312n51, 327n73
- Dehmel, Richard, 201, 244
- Delibes, Leo, 156
- Derrida, Jacques, 286
- diatonicism, 6, 30, 32, 211, 286
- D'Indy, Vincent, 151
- dissolution, 216
- of the voice, 7, 33, 141, 222, 245
- distance, 46, 49, 53–54, 57, 65, 70–71, 85, 104, 168, 181, 183, 206, 209, 219, 237, 244
- divertimento, 111–12, 113, 118–19, 124, 126
- divided voice, 6, 42, 298n14
- Donizetti, Gaetano, 305n69
- Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, 167, 196–98, 201–2, 207, 269, 317nn11–15
- double voice, 5, 197–98, 216, 224
- drama, 10, 23, 28, 160, 169, 174, 180, 187, 192–93, 218
- Draughon, Francesca, 259–60
- dreamers, 41–42, 112–13
- dreams, as way of telling, 5, 70, 160, 172, 203, 207–16, 222, 321n103
- Dubrow, Heather, 166, 310n7, 310n9
- Durchbruch*, 114, 219, 283. *See also* breakthrough
- Eggebrecht, Hans Heinrich, 71, 213, 218, 284, 286, 297n27, 301n9, 307n97, 323n143, 334n39
- Eichendorff, Joseph von, 124, 129, 202, 206–7, 209, 282–83, 302nn21–22, 320n82
- Elgar, Edward, 162
- enactment, 6–7, 181, 193, 217–18, 220–22

- epic form, 10, 32, 197, 210, 290n12  
 epic tone, 6, 10, 167–68, 170, 195, 246–47  
 episode structure, 70, 84, 120, 127, 140, 159,  
     163, 173, 184, 187–88, 192, 209, 213–16,  
     218, 222–23, 235, 300n42  
 Epstein, Julius, 159  
 Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, 130  
 erotic, 132, 229, 234, 277, 335n57  
 Expressionism, 14, 34, 164, 230, 232–33, 238,  
     245, 265  
 expressionless voice, 14, 84  
  
 fairy tale, 6, 10, 57, 70, 107, 127, 157–58,  
     172–74, 183–84, 189, 213–16, 222, 229, 285,  
     304n61  
 Falke, Gustav, 201  
 fanfares, 20, 46, 49, 51, 53–55, 57, 70, 112,  
     115–16, 118, 183, 203, 212, 223, 296n21  
 farewell, 84, 216, 331n141. *See also* valediction  
 Farwell, Arthur, 39  
 Fechner, Gustav, 199, 201–2  
 Feder, Stuart, 307n99  
 festival, 20, 46, 49, 51, 53–55, 57, 70, 112,  
     115–16, 118, 301n45  
 fictionality, 130–31, 164, 188, 213, 263–88  
 film, 56, 164, 173, 181, 212, 220, 240, 314n74,  
     329n103  
 Finson, John, 103, 255  
 Fischer, Jens Malte, 267, 291n19  
 Fischer, Kurt von, 23, 293n55  
 Flaubert, Gustave, 198  
 Floros, Constantin, 25, 30, 172, 196, 199,  
     238–39, 257, 291n27, 298n10, 301n9,  
     317n3, 319n53, 320n106, 322n111  
 Flothius, Marius, 154  
 Flotow, Friedrich von, 146, 154, 156  
 Foerster, Josef B., 308n118  
 folk song, 19, 21, 100–1, 103–5, 129–30, 153,  
     161, 213, 222–23  
 folk style, 6, 19, 111, 113–14, 125, 132, 141, 157,  
     158, 165, 175, 215, 230, 245–46, 251, 255.  
     *See also* *Volkston*  
 force, 3, 22, 39, 52, 55, 94, 119–20, 182–83  
     188, 192, 221, 225–26, 246, 281, 284–85,  
     301n46  
 fragmentation, 27–28, 33–37, 40, 84, 113,  
     118, 141–42, 144, 183, 217, 222, 248, 271,  
     333n35  
 framing gestures, 10, 46, 84, 184, 215, 223,  
     264–65, 316n126  
  
 Franchetti, Alberto, 156  
 Franklin, Peter, 17, 133, 163, 169–70, 181,  
     188–89, 192, 199, 247, 249–51, 255, 261,  
     291n24, 292n42, 298n6, 305nn74–75,  
     307n96, 311n25, 316n126, 334n40  
 Frege, Gottlob, 231  
 Freud, Sigmund, 233, 254  
 Freund, Ernst, 312n51  
 Fried, Oskar, 256  
 Friedell, Egon, 254  
 Fuchs, Johann, 290n10  
 Fuchs, Robert, 290n10  
 fugue, 37, 116, 118  
 fulfillment, 216  
  
 Geck, Martin, 213  
 genius, 93, 98  
 genre, 10, 164–94, 209, 212, 215–17, 247, 272,  
     305n72, 309n3, 310n7  
 George, Stefan, 201  
 Gerstl, Richard, 229  
 Goehr, Lydia, 269  
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 56, 105,  
     160–61, 201–2, 206, 261, 289n4, 293n67  
     *Faust*, 180–81, 244, 287  
 Goldmark, Karl, 290n10  
 Gounod, Charles, 156  
 Greene, David B., 110, 193, 267  
 Greif, Martin, 173, 201, 290n11, 313n55  
 grotesque, 6, 125, 131, 142, 145, 199, 203, 208,  
     224, 244, 246, 259, 267  
 Gutheil-Schoder, Marie, 203  
 Gutman, Emil, 326n46  
  
 Habsburg empire, 152, 247, 249–51, 254, 257  
 Haitink, Bernard, 268  
 Halévy, Jacques, 156, 157  
     *La Juiv*, 157  
 Hamburg, 158, 181, 186, 262, 302n19, 312n42,  
     320n61  
 Hansen, Mathias, 323n147  
 Hanslick, Eduard, 102, 153, 165, 239–40, 255,  
     326n48  
 harp, 10, 14, 32–33, 61, 69, 71, 83, 85, 114,  
     208–9, 215, 297n31  
 Hartleben, Otto, 201  
 Hauptmann, Gerhart, 201  
 Haydn, Joseph, 53, 94, 100, 110, 113, 128, 136,  
     153, 165, 237, 301n5, 302n16, 306n79,  
     308n118

- heaven, 32, 69–70, 113–15, 131, 167, 189, 194,  
 206, 208–9, 211, 215, 244  
 Hefling, Stephen E., 22, 110, 141, 159, 172,  
 187, 199, 200–201, 274, 302nn19–22,  
 304nn55–56, 307n98, 311n29, 318n43,  
 319n44  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 53, 93, 270  
 Heidegger, Martin, 47  
 Heine, Heinrich, 129, 206, 295n3  
 Helm, Theodor, 125, 154, 240, 274, 308n12,  
 334n48  
 Hellmesberger, Joseph, 290n10  
 Henckell, Karl, 201  
 Henze, Hans Werner, 238, 269  
 Hermand, Jost, 204  
 heteroglossia, 132, 141–42, 232, 253–54  
 heterophony, 34, 68, 198, 266  
 Hirschfeld, Robert, 39–40, 146, 151, 154, 166,  
 186, 215, 243, 248, 254, 260, 263, 308n112  
 historicism, 106–7, 113, 118, 124, 152, 229,  
 277, 286  
 Hoffmann, E. T. A., 112, 119, 124, 127, 141, 160,  
 202–3, 207, 270, 282, 320n64, 321n89  
 Kapellmeister Kreisler, 202–3, 256, 281,  
 319nn53–54  
*Kater Murr*, 205–6, 224  
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, 231–33, 241, 254,  
 299n25  
 Hölderlin, Friedrich, 202, 206  
 Horn, Richard, 225  
 horn calls, 10, 41, 46, 51–57, 61, 65, 70, 92, 114,  
 116, 209, 247, 296n23  
*Humor*, 100, 125–34, 139, 145, 149, 163, 196,  
 202, 206, 234, 269, 271, 287, 301n5,  
 302n13  
*Humoreske*, 125–26, 167, 301n9  
 Humperdinck, Engelbert, 156  
*Hänsel und Gretel*, 6, 157, 214, 321n106  
*Humoreske*, 126  
 hymn, 17, 25, 27, 30, 86, 210, 273, 277, 281,  
 291n27  
 Ibsen, Henrik, 202, 319n48  
 idyll, 6, 30, 114–15, 207–16, 222, 236–37  
 Iglau, 42, 250–53, 262  
 instrumental voices, 17–18. *See also*  
 orchestral voices  
 interlude, 31, 57, 85, 160, 162, 172, 192, 209,  
 213, 222, 227, 235  
 interpolation, 10, 206, 216–17, 257  
 intertextuality, 163, 269  
 irony, 231, 244–46, 281, 284  
 ironic tone in Mahler, 3, 6, 14, 83, 98,  
 100–101, 119, 134–51, 152, 163, 189,  
 198–99, 207, 211, 216, 230, 234, 247, 259,  
 265–67, 270–72, 281, 287–88, 302n19,  
 304n54, 304n56  
 Romantic irony, 94, 102, 113, 125, 141, 149,  
 202–3, 259, 269–70, 286, 288, 302n19  
 Istel, Edgar, 202, 319n54  
 Ives, Charles, 132, 154, 268  
 Jameux, Dominique, 242–43  
 Janáček, Leoš, 252, 329n108  
 Jankélévitch, Vladimir, 259  
 Jarman, Douglas, 246  
 Jewish elements in Mahler's music, 257–62  
 Jewish identity, 250–62, 331n153  
 Johnson, Julian, 316n123, 320n63, 323n143,  
 325n35, 326n45, 333n29  
*Jungen, Die*, 106  
 Kalbeck, Max, 182, 184, 189, 202–3, 207, 234,  
 264, 326n42  
 Kališř, 254  
 Kallberg, Jeffrey, 187, 309n3, 310n7  
 Kant, Immanuel, 202, 251  
*Kapellmeistermusik*, 152  
 Kaplan, Gilbert, 268, 293n66, 306n93, 333n21  
 Kaplan, Richard, 191, 223–24, 323n145  
 Kapp, Reinhard, 154, 159  
 Karbusický, Vladimír, 257–60, 330n137,  
 331n141  
 Karpath, Ludwig, 100–101  
 Kassel, 160, 174, 201  
 Kennedy, Michael, 311n29  
 Kierkegaard, Søren, 141  
 kitsch, 146, 231, 272  
*klagend* (as performance direction), 7, 10, 27,  
 57, 136, 140, 144, 211, 236  
 Klemm, Eberhardt, 226, 271, 333n35, 334n50  
 Klimt, Gustav, 83–84, 210–11, 229, 234–37,  
 243, 325n31, 325n33  
*Beethoven* frieze, 235, 237  
 Landscape paintings, 236–37  
 Klinger, Max, 234–35  
 Klopstock, Friedrich, 199, 258, 285  
*Knaben Wunderhorn*, *Des*, 98–106, 129, 157,  
 170, 193, 207, 229, 243, 245, 247, 255,  
 191n25



- Knapp, Raymond, 18, 132, 161, 184, 188, 217,  
250, 259–60, 296n25, 298n12, 300n32,  
328n88, 329n103
- Knittel, K. M., 256, 326n39, 334n48
- Kokoschka, Oskar, 229–30, 324n9
- Korngold, Erich, 266
- Korngold, Julius, 129, 207, 248, 320n71
- Koschat, Thomas, 153
- Kralik, Richard, 255
- Kramer, Lawrence, 17, 188, 217
- Kraus, Karl, 157, 231–32, 234–35, 254, 260
- Krebs, Carl, 319n53
- Krenek, Ernst, 254, 328n84
- Krenn, Franz, 252
- Krisper, Anton, 155–56, 173, 202, 307n98
- Kubik, Reinhold, 52, 323n136
- Kurth, Ernst, 273–74, 296n24, 334n47
- La Grange, Henry-Louis de, 144, 154,  
160, 176–77, 189, 193, 202, 209,  
248, 300n43, 315n97, 323n139, 324n20,  
329n98
- Landau, Ludwig, 331n141
- Ländler, 102–4, 141, 146, 165, 215–16, 244–46,  
298n13
- landscape, 52, 83–84, 181, 183, 206–10, 214,  
230, 236, 245, 248
- Langford, Jeffrey, 192–93, 314n76
- language, 4, 230, 232, 252–55, 272  
music as, 3, 19, 164, 213, 217, 267, 171, 187,  
189n5, 332n5  
philosophy of, 230, 232–34 (see also  
*Sprachkritik*)
- Lecocq, Charles, 156
- Leduc Alain, 141, 302n19
- Lehár, Franz, 156  
*Die lustige Witwe*, 118, 157, 300n44
- Leibling, Leonard, 151, 153
- Lemberg, 256
- Lenau, Nikolaus, 202, 206
- Leoncavallo, Ruggero, *La Bohème*, 172
- Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Wiens,  
198, 247, 251, 255
- Levi, Hermann, 255–56
- Lieder, 5, 17, 19–25, 222–23, 229–30  
Orchestral Lieder, 22–23, 291n24
- Ligeti, György, 269
- Liliencron, Detlev von, 201
- Lipiner, Siegfried, 172, 198–202, 207, 251
- Liszt, Franz, 132, 151, 160, 164, 203, 239, 277,  
296n22  
*Eine Faust Symphonie*, 113, 160  
*Die Legende der heiligen Elisabeth*, 154, 160  
*Rhapsodie espagnole*, 308n125
- literature, 195–207
- Loeser, Norbert, 197
- Löhr, Fritz, 157, 250, 307n99, 312n54, 329n101
- Loos, Adolf, 231, 234
- Lortzing, Albert, 156, 157  
*Zar und Zimmermann*, 157, 307n105,  
327n56
- Louis, Rudolf, 22, 258–59
- Lowengard, Max, 263
- Lueger, Karl, 251
- lullaby, 75, 165, 213, 311n25
- lute, 14, 32, 69, 83, 209
- lyrical voice, 4–7, 10, 13, 17–19, 25–27, 48–49,  
51, 55–56, 67, 70, 72, 83, 85–90, 96,  
98, 100–101, 105, 111, 113–15, 124, 140,  
144, 148, 165, 167, 169–70, 174, 191–92,  
210–12, 215, 224–26, 236, 244–45, 272–82,  
290n12, 300n42, 335n51
- Maeterlinck, Maurice, 241, 319n48
- Mahler, Alma (née Schindler), 31, 83, 120,  
124, 133, 155, 157, 201, 203, 205, 207, 215,  
220, 228, 236, 240–41, 255–56, 261, 265,  
271, 283, 287, 292n43, 303n40, 303n43,  
306n87, 307n105, 307n108, 312n42,  
313n62, 319n48, 320n71, 324n3, 325n31,  
330n124, 335n57
- Mahler, Anna, 254
- Mahler, Gustav  
annotations on manuscripts, 4, 239, 247,  
249, 291n25, 296n20, 321n100  
as conductor, 152–53, 156, 160, 184–85, 214,  
242–43, 253, 256–57, 307n105, 330n133  
conversion to Catholicism, 255, 259,  
330n124  
and his critics, 39, 145–46, 149, 151–53,  
157, 165, 174, 182, 186–87, 237–40, 243,  
248–49, 256–59, 266, 314n84, 330n132  
(see also reception)  
at the Hofoper, 156, 182, 184, 204, 214,  
230–31, 234, 250–52, 255, 271, 290n10,  
305n73, 307n105, 312n42, 325n28  
and noise, 237  
revisions, 38, 209n14, 294n76

## Mahler works

Early opera projects, 158, 172–74, 213–14, 296n14, 311n31, 312nn41–42

Early Songs, 6, 17, 42, 64, 98, 100, 102–5, 156, 159, 295nn3–4, 309n134; “Frühlingsmorgen,” 64; “Hans und Grete” (“Maitanz in Grünen”), 19, 21, 100, 103–5, 130, 161; “Im Lenz,” 41–42, 46, 104, 163, 171, 295n2, 307n98, 307n100; “Winterlied,” 42–46, 104, 159, 165, 170–71

*Kindertotenlieder*, 6, 27, 70, 71–86, 98, 141, 162, 169, 174, 211, 218, 283, 290n18, 293n55, 297n33, 309n134, 311n29, 313n71; “In diesem Wetter,” 75, 79; “Nun seh’ ich wohl,” 74–78, 309n131; “Nun will die Sonn,” 72–74, 79; “Oft denk’ ich,” 6, 79, 81–82, 162, 297n35; “Wenn dein Mütterlein,” 6, 10

*Das klagende Lied*, 6, 10–13, 17, 27, 32, 46, 57, 71, 100, 104, 163, 168, 170, 173, 185, 213–14, 218, 243, 290nn13–14, 290n16, 298n14, 301n45, 307n98, 312nn51–52, 313n55, 314n87

*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, 6, 17, 19–21, 42, 49, 70, 100, 105, 159, 165, 168–69, 171, 201, 222–23, 227, 283, 291n32, 295n1, 298n10; “Ging heut morgen übers Feld,” 19–20, 49; “Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht,” 6, 20; “Die zwei blauen Augen,” 6, 213

*Das Lied von der Erde*, 5, 13–17, 22, 32, 42, 56, 64–69, 83–86, 105, 115, 169, 171, 174, 194, 215, 220–21, 227, 236–37, 244; “Der Abschied,” 10, 14–17, 23, 64–70, 84–86, 92, 153, 227, 290n18; “Der Einsame im Herbst,” 83–84; “Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde,” 13–14, 84; “Das Trunkene im Frühling,” 6, 64, 65, 130; “Von der Jugend,” 220; “Von der Schönheit,” 220

Middle (instrumental) symphonies, 19, 33, 98, 106–24

Piano Quartet, 100, 298n8

*Rückert Lieder*, 5, 6, 19, 23, 37, 95–98, 169, 289n6; “Blicke mir, nicht in die Lieder,” 95–98; “Ich atmet’ einen Linden Duft,” 6; “Ich bin der Welt abhanden

gekommen,” 6, 10, 33, 96–98, 161, 211, 236–37; “Um Mitternacht,” 54, 296n11

Scherzo movements, 6, 18–19, 28, 33, 40, 56–57, 87, 113–14, 116, 124–126, 128–32, 141, 145, 160, 184, 216, 220, 226, 230, 234, 245–46

*Symphony No. 1*, 3, 7, 19–21, 31, 37, 46, 48–51, 53, 55, 64, 88, 101, 103–4, 118, 125, 128–29, 133, 141, 146, 153–54, 159, 161, 166, 172, 174–75, 179–81, 183, 185–86, 189, 191, 193, 201–5, 210, 213, 218–19, 222–25, 239–40, 247, 257–58, 273, 285, 290n17, 291n32, 296n12, 296n14, 302n19, 305n75, 310n20, 314n88, 319n44, 326n48

*Symphony No. 2*, 3, 10, 18–19, 33, 39, 53, 65, 69, 71, 125–28, 129, 141, 146, 148, 153, 160–61, 163, 171–72, 177, 181, 183, 185–89, 194, 198–201, 209–10, 214–15, 217–18, 223–26, 230, 253, 258–59, 268–69, 273, 285, 297n36, 305n70, 306n78, 306n82, 316n126, 318n43

*Symphony No. 3*, 4, 17–18, 24, 27, 30, 33, 37, 39, 47–48, 51–53, 55–57, 69, 70, 106–7, 112, 125–28, 130–33, 141–42, 148, 153, 156, 159–61, 164, 177, 181, 183, 186–90, 192–94, 196, 198–200, 209–10, 213–14, 217–20, 223–26, 230, 235, 247–49, 253, 259–61, 273–74, 277, 281, 284–85, 289n3, 291n25, 293n69, 296n15, 304n56, 306n79, 307n106, 308n118, 321n100, 328nn84–88

*Symphony No. 4*, 19, 25, 28, 30, 32–34, 57–61, 69–71, 98, 105–15, 124–26, 131, 133–34, 148, 153, 156, 159, 161–62, 184, 186–67, 189, 191, 193, 203, 208–12, 215, 223–24, 227, 235–36, 248, 271, 283, 285, 294n79, 300n32, 300n34, 304n49, 304n56, 309n151

*Symphony No. 5*, 7, 19, 27, 30–31, 33, 39, 52–53, 55–57, 71, 96, 98, 107, 112, 115–19, 124–25, 130, 132–33, 145, 147, 151, 153, 162, 171, 182, 188, 193–94, 198, 208, 218, 243, 249, 258, 267–68, 273, 275, 283, 285, 293n61, 300n38, 300nn41–42, 301n45

*Symphony No. 6*, 18, 28, 30, 34, 37–39, 52, 70, 83, 86, 90, 107, 111, 120, 141, 145–46, 154, 160, 163, 165, 171, 180, 184, 191, 194, 203, 208–12, 220, 222–27, 243, 246, 283, 285, 290n18, 294n81, 300n31, 321n106, 334n40

Mahler works (*continued*)

*Symphony No. 7*, 6, 30–31, 33, 55–57, 65, 87, 107, 118–24, 129, 133, 141–45, 148, 153, 159, 161–62, 176–77, 188, 193–94, 200, 202, 206–7, 209–10, 224–25, 227, 230, 242–43, 245–46, 255, 265, 283, 285–86, 294n78, 300nn43–44, 306n86, 320n82, 323n139

*Symphony No. 8*, 5, 17, 25, 31–32, 37, 55–56, 153–54, 162, 180–81, 194, 198, 209, 241, 244, 250, 260, 285, 292n53, 294n74, 295n7, 305n69, 315n97, 326n46, 331n153

*Symphony No. 9*, 6, 23, 27–28, 30, 34–37, 47, 55, 69, 70, 84–87, 90, 92, 130, 141, 144, 153, 156–57, 162, 169, 171, 188, 194, 198, 208, 215, 224, 230, 233, 236, 239, 242, 246, 273, 277–82, 286, 297n35, 304n56, 304n58, 335n51

*Symphony No. 10*, 28–30, 34, 38, 70, 83, 86–92, 102, 161, 180, 199, 201, 224, 239, 271, 273, 281

*Todtenfeier*, 172, 185, 194, 200–201, 217, 302n22, 318n43

*Der Trompeter von Säkkingen*, 174, 205

*Wunderhorn* Lieder, 5–6, 19, 54, 85, 94, 98–107, 112–13, 124–25, 132, 134–41, 154, 165, 168–69, 207, 228, 271, 291n24, 298n6, 298n10, 311n24; “Ablösung im Sommer,” 6, 113, 125, 130, 134–35, 161, 200; “Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt,” 6, 19, 113, 125, 128–30, 141, 161, 224–25, 268–69; “Aus! Aus!,” 126, 130, 136–38; “Es sun gen drei Engel,” 130, 133; “Das himmlische Leben,” 105, 107, 115, 125, 131, 161; “Ich ging mit Lust,” 6, 168; “Das irdische Leben,” 141, 161; “Lied des Verfolgten im Turm,” 169; “Lob des hohen Verstands,” 126, 130, 131, 300n38; “Nicht Wiedersehen!” 85; “Revelge,” 98, 140–41, 161, 225; “Rheinlegendchen,” 137; “Scheiden und Meiden,” 168; “Der Schildwache Nachtlid,” 169; “Selbstgefühl,” 130; “Starke Einbildungskraft,” 125, 126, 134–35; “Der Tamboursg’sell,” 98, 140–41, 225, 286; “Trost im Unglück,” 126, 135, 169–70; “Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen,” 6, 126, 135; “Urlicht,” 161; “Verlorne Müh,” 125, 126, 136; “Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?!” 126, 130,

137–40; “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen,” 169, 213; “Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz,” 54

*Wunderhorn* Symphonies, 18, 19, 23–25, 124, 158, 161, 185, 189, 278

Mahler, Justine, 95, 256, 301n1, 312n42

Maier, Charles, 230

Maillart, Louis-Aimé, 156

major-minor alternation, 14, 23, 72–74, 84, 159, 169, 208

Man, Paul de, 13, 188, 270–71

Mann, Thomas, 261

march forms, 6, 19, 33, 37, 52, 67, 84, 86, 120, 124–25, 131, 140–41, 145, 162, 165, 183–84, 188, 191–92, 203, 208, 210, 216, 222, 224–27, 230, 244, 246–48, 257

Marschalk, Max, 100, 172, 173, 190, 213–14, 218, 241–42, 302n21, 311n34

Marschner, Heinrich, 156, 157

Martner, Knud, 201, 298n10

Mascagni, Pietro, 214, 311n34

*Cavalleria rusticana*, 172

Massenet, Jules, 293n67

Matisse, Henri, 37

Matter, Jean, 301n9

Mauthner, Fritz, 98, 231, 233–34, 253, 335n56

McColl, Sandra, 184, 255–56

McGrath, William J., 199

meandering, 217, 226–27

Méhul, Étienne-Nicolas, 156

Mendelssohn, Felix, 157, 158, 160, 229, 237, 274

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 127, 160, 215

Mengelberg, Willem, 268

Mereshkovsky, Dimitri, 319n50

meter, 6, 141, 142, 224, 281

Metzger, Heinz-Klaus, 267

Mickiewicz, Adam, 200–201, 302n22

Micznik, Vera, 165, 215, 304n58, 305n72, 309n2, 310n7, 317n3, 322n11

Mildenburg, Anna, 47, 297n29

Mitchell, Donald, 67, 153, 169, 185, 218, 268, 306n93, 308n112, 308n119, 309n133, 310n24, 316n126

Modernism, 101, 106, 131, 149, 165, 194, 202, 215, 228–62, 265–66, 269

in Mahler, 3, 39–40, 94, 98, 102, 124, 149, 186, 220, 238, 266, 270, 278, 287–88

Molière, 202

- Moll, Carl, 236
- Monelle, Raymond, 101, 120, 165, 187, 215,  
218, 267–68, 297n1, 303n42, 305n70
- monumentality, 22–23, 189–90, 194, 285
- Moos, Paul, 263
- Morgan, Robert, 154, 188, 308n125
- Mörrike, Eduard, 201
- Moser, Koloman, 229
- motet, 31, 153
- Mottl, Felix, 251
- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 94, 98, 110,  
118, 153, 157, 237, 283, 301n5, 306n81,  
325n28  
*Le nozze di Figaro*, 214  
*Die Zauberflöte*, 214
- Munich, 203
- Muntz, Maximilian, 145
- Naegele, Philipp Otto, 300n41
- naïveté, 6, 22, 42, 61, 95–98, 100, 103, 106–7,  
112, 115, 133–35, 137, 140, 145, 149, 160,  
172, 189, 193, 197, 214–15, 228–29, 249,  
265–66, 271, 283, 303n43, 304n61
- narrative, 3–4, 6, 10, 13–14, 16–17, 54, 57,  
65, 85, 112, 124, 130, 153, 161, 164–65,  
170, 173–74, 179–80, 182, 184, 188, 192,  
195–227, 235, 240, 245, 265
- nature, 20, 46–48, 51–52, 54–57, 61, 65, 68,  
70, 83–85, 93, 101, 113, 115, 125, 132, 188,  
206–8, 210–11, 214–15, 226, 236–37, 243,  
247, 296n15
- Naturlaut*, 48, 52, 115, 222–23, 230, 243,  
323n143, 334n39
- Neitzel, Otto, 116
- Neoclassicism, 152, 163, 305n72
- Neue Sachlichkeit*, 231
- Neurath, Otto, 254
- New York, 186, 240, 254, 256, 262
- Newcomb, Anthony, 322n111, 333n29
- Nicolai, Otto, 156
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 24, 48, 53, 70, 132–33,  
188, 198–202, 207, 212, 229, 233, 235–36,  
248, 285, 319n48  
*The Birth of Tragedy*, 199–200, 213, 321n99
- nihilism, 87, 222
- noise, 132, 326n38
- nostalgia, 27, 87, 104, 110, 136, 141, 145, 157,  
219, 230, 305n70
- Notley, Margaret, 273–74, 334nn45–48
- novel, 119, 132, 134, 160, 195–209, 213, 216–17,  
224, 240, 250, 272, 282, 318n27
- Offenbach, Jacques, 156, 157  
*The Tales of Hoffmann*, 203
- Oltmanns, Michael, 22, 167, 170, 310n16
- opera, 10, 14, 25, 45, 49, 98, 114, 119, 120, 131,  
157, 158–59, 160, 166, 171–85, 188, 190,  
192–93, 203, 219, 230–31, 245–46, 282,  
313n71  
*opera buffa*, 188, 214
- operetta, 21, 118, 125, 156, 157, 174, 184–85, 187,  
307n108, 314n84
- oratorio, 17, 25, 31, 244
- orchestral voices, 7, 20–21, 23–25, 25–40, 126,  
141–42, 193, 296n25
- orchestration, 5, 17–18, 20, 35–40, 48–49,  
51–52, 56–57, 61, 69–70, 87, 103, 110–11,  
114, 119, 124, 126, 128, 139, 141–42, 193,  
210, 220–23, 234, 242–46, 248, 273,  
294n74, 294n76, 294n79, 296n12, 314n81
- orientalism, 32, 85, 124, 215, 220, 256,  
330n132
- Orpheus, 33, 71, 83, 297n31
- Painter, Karen, 39, 243, 305n71, 331n153
- pantomime, 131, 174, 184, 192, 214  
*parabasis*, 270
- paradise, 6, 212, 235. *See also* heaven
- parenthesis, 90, 110, 183, 216, 222–23, 323n139
- parody, 70, 100, 103, 107, 115, 120, 141, 144, 151,  
167, 170, 213, 233, 244, 247, 258–59, 268,  
272, 277, 283, 288, 290n17, 304n49
- pastoral, 49, 54, 56–57, 70, 163, 165, 170,  
208–9, 211, 220, 222–24, 230
- Peattie, Thomas, 220, 323n137
- Pecker Berio, Talia, 259
- pentatonicism, 65, 67, 69
- performance, 4, 232, 263–69, 285, 305n70,  
311n24
- performance directions, 17, 30, 38, 49, 57, 72,  
83–84, 112–13, 125–26, 130, 135, 140, 144,  
146–48, 161, 180–81, 183, 213, 219–20, 225,  
271, 294nn80–83
- Perle, George, 246
- Pernerstorfer Circle, 251, 255, 328n85
- persona, 3, 5, 14, 16, 180, 217
- Pfitzner, Hans, 264, 266, 333n37, 335n69  
*Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, 241–42, 243

- Pfohl, Ferdinand, 181, 203  
 Pickett, David, 332n7  
 plateaux, 56, 216, 245  
*Plötzlichkeit*, 218  
 plural voices, 2, 5, 152, 156, 185, 188, 196, 222,  
 229–30, 247–48, 250–51, 253–54, 257, 272,  
 303n42  
 Po, Li, 215  
 Pohl, Richard, 334n45  
 Poisl, Josephine, 42, 202  
 politics, 230, 236–37, 247–62, 328n85, 328n89  
 polka, 217, 257  
 polyphony, 5, 20, 25, 27–29, 31–33, 40, 119,  
 132, 168, 254, 273  
 polyphonic novel, 196–97  
 postmodernism, 266, 268–69, 272, 305n72  
 in Mahler, 3, 163, 229, 238, 247, 268–69,  
 287–88  
 Prague, 172, 233, 252–53, 262  
 programaticism, 47, 49, 54, 107, 160–61, 164,  
 180, 190, 192–93, 238–40, 326n42  
 programs (in Mahler), 4, 52–53, 133,  
 185–87, 218, 238–40, 247, 302n22,  
 326nn46–47  
*prosopopeia*, 13  
 psychoanalysis, 13, 230, 233, 241  
 Puccini, Giacomo, 151, 171, 293n67, 313n62  
 Puffett, Derrick, 238–39, 246, 328n75  
 quotation, 153–56, 163, 231–32, 264, 268  
 self-quotation, 161–63  
 Rabelais, François, *Gargantua*, 131, 132  
 Racine, Jean, 202  
*Ranz des vaches*, 296n22  
 Ravel, Maurice, *La Valse*, 246  
 realism, 21, 49, 54, 114, 129, 131, 145, 157,  
 160–61, 164, 172, 203, 215, 229, 241  
 reception, 94, 98, 102, 104, 115, 128, 135–36,  
 145–46, 152–54, 186–87, 217, 236, 237–40,  
 243, 247–48, 256–60, 263–69, 284,  
 315n97, 318n27  
 recitative, 14, 25, 67, 69, 84–85, 113, 153, 166,  
 182, 291n27  
 Redlich, Hans, 146, 203, 246, 297n32, 328n76,  
 328n81  
 registral placement, 34–37  
 Reilly, Edward, 175, 309n134  
 Reinhardt, Max, 254  
 reminiscence, 71, 88, 104, 111, 115, 159, 162, 168,  
 192, 186, 216, 218–34, 296n23  
 representation, 4, 10, 20, 105, 115, 164, 169,  
 230, 286  
 repressed voices, 13, 17, 87, 94, 101, 290n16,  
 298n14  
*Retuschen* (re-orchestrations), 158, 294n79,  
 308n113  
 Revers, Peter, 209–10, 218, 243, 297n33  
 revoking, 71–92, 115  
 rhetoric, 5, 13, 25, 33, 54, 111, 113–15, 119, 130,  
 181, 194, 217, 226, 240, 272, 282, 288  
 Richter, Hans, 290n10  
 Richter, Jean Paul  
 fiction, 119, 127, 155, 160, 202, 204–6, 211,  
 224, 259, 270, 282, 309n127, 334n40  
*Der Titan*, 203–5, 240  
*Vorschule der Ästhetik*, 127–32, 133, 208–9,  
 234, 270, 290n11, 301n9  
 Richter, Johanna, 201, 295n1  
 Riegl, Alois, 211  
 Riehn, Rainer, 267  
 Riezler, Walter, 305n69  
 Rihm, Wolfgang, 269  
 Rilke, Rainer Maria, 201, 232  
 Ritter, William, 229, 248  
 Roller, Alfred, 182, 234, 312n42  
 Romain, Roland, 182, 301n46, 325n28  
 Romantic aesthetics, 18, 20, 46–47, 53, 93,  
 101–2, 202, 207, 212, 215, 229–30, 238  
 Romanticism (in Mahler), 3, 124, 192  
 rondo form, 111, 119, 192, 193, 200  
 Rosé, Arnold, 242  
 Rosegger, Peter, 245, 327n73  
 Rosen, Charles, 25, 296n23  
 Rosenfeld, Paul, 260  
 Rossini, Gioacchino, 296n22  
 Rott, Hans, 307n96  
 round dance (*Reigen*), 6, 246  
 Rubinstein, Anton, *Dämon*, 310n106  
 Rückert, Friedrich, 71, 74, 202, 206  
 Russian formalism, 196, 318n17  
 rustic voices, 6, 21, 54, 56, 104, 111, 114, 125,  
 132, 145–46, 184, 188, 220, 230  
 Saint-Saëns, Camille, 151  
 Salzkammergut, 210, 236. *See also* Attersee  
 Samson, Jim, 310n7, 315n90  
 Samuels, Robert, 110, 141, 166, 298n13, 317n3

- satire, 131, 141, 144, 151, 166–67, 186, 209–10, 232, 246
- scenic form, 5, 49, 103–4, 160, 165, 174, 181–83, 187, 192, 222, 240, 307n99
- Schadendorf, Mirjam, 301n9
- Schäfer, Thomas, 39, 269, 332n5
- Scharlitt, Bernard, 200
- Scheichl, Sigurd Paul, 232
- Schelling, Friedrich, 202
- Scherchen, Hermann, 268
- Scherzinger, Martin, 200, 286
- Schiele, Egon, 229, 235
- Schiff, David, 106, 110, 153–54, 189–90, 257, 305n76
- Schiller, Friedrich, 24, 207–8, 255
- Schlegel, Friedrich, 94, 105, 270
- Schmitt, Theodor, 277, 284, 293n69, 294n79, 306n79, 308n118, 334n43
- Schnittke, Alfred, 269
- Schnitzler, Arthur, 229, 230, 231, 255, 324n10
- Schoenberg, Arnold, 47, 100, 102, 114, 119, 157, 201, 229–32, 234, 236, 238–29, 242–44, 254, 257, 260, 295n7
- Chamber Symphony No. 1, 238, 242–43, 246
- Erwartung*, 164, 230
- Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16, 242–43
- Gurrelieder*, 243
- Herzgewächse*, 243–44, 300n36
- Die Jakobsleiter*, 233, 244, 300n36
- Pelleas und Melisande*, 242
- Pierrot Lunaire*, 230, 244
- Serenade, Op. 24, 244
- Six Orchestral Songs, Op. 8, 243
- String Quartet No. 2, 190, 243, 300n36
- Verklärte Nacht*, 242, 300n36
- Schönerer, Georg von, 252
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 23–24, 46–47, 199–202, 212, 233, 235, 247, 319n48, 327n55
- Schorske, Carl E., 231, 237, 325n30
- Schreker, Franz, 132, 229, 266
- Schubert, Franz, 20, 22–23, 100, 113, 133, 153, 157, 159–60, 168, 211, 213, 215, 230, 237, 257, 296n23, 308n118
- Die schöne Müllerin*, 159, 227
- Winterreise*, 159, 227
- Schumann, Otto, 266
- Schumann, Robert, 42, 45, 47, 94, 100, 126, 127, 157, 159–60, 171, 192, 195, 203, 205–6, 217, 229, 239, 259, 268, 270–71, 274, 283, 288, 334n38
- Lieder, 42, 129, 159, 207, 282–83, 295nn2–3, 299n21
- Second Viennese School, 28, 154, 201–2, 231, 234, 238–39, 242–47, 251–52, 269
- Segantini, Giovanni, 325n35
- Seidl, Arthur, 240, 273
- self-critique, 26, 28, 146, 149, 191, 194, 210, 230, 234, 269–82, 286, 288
- sentimentality, 6, 27, 32, 99, 106, 124, 134, 140, 145–46, 148–49, 157, 205, 207, 211–12, 219–20, 230, 258–59, 266, 271, 283, 304n61, 305n69
- serenade, 31, 110, 120–24, 153, 161, 207, 209, 242–45, 265, 320n18
- Shakespeare, William, 128, 160–61, 202, 209, 213, 282, 284, 319n48, 321n100
- Sheinberg, Esti, 141–42, 144, 154, 299n26, 304n51, 304n56
- Sibelius, Jean, 83, 128, 293n60
- sincerity, 29, 152, 265, 269, 271–72, 277. *See also* authenticity
- Smeed, J. W., 208
- Smetana, Bedřich, 254, 257
- The Bartered Bride*, 252
- Dalibor*, 252
- Huďička*, 306n93
- Smyth, Ethel, 303n44
- Solvik, Morten, 228, 324n2
- sonata form, 23, 110–13, 188, 191–93, 219, 222–24, 246
- song (as genre), 10, 13–14, 17–26, 29, 32–33, 85, 103, 105, 145, 167–71, 188
- song cycle, 20, 23, 42, 49, 185, 315n97
- songs without words, 17, 22–23, 30–31, 210, 244, 274, 293n61
- space, 30, 39, 48, 52, 56–67, 65, 67, 69, 181, 183, 193, 209–10, 212–13, 216, 223, 244–45
- Spanuth, August, 187
- Specht, Richard, 25, 136, 195–96, 202, 289n3, 292n53, 294n78, 331n1
- Spiegler, Albert, 172, 204
- Sponheuer, Bernd, 219
- Sprachkritik*, 233–35
- spring, 42, 64, 65
- Stahmer, Klaus Hinrich, 298n8

- stasis, 7, 83  
 Stefan, Paul, 173, 202, 312n41  
 Steinberg, Michael, 231  
 Steiner, Josef, 155, 205, 307n97  
 Steiner, Rudolf, 214  
 Steinitzer, Max, 202  
 Stephan, Rudolf, 181, 194, 274, 306n78  
 Sterne, Laurence, *Tristram Shandy*, 127, 130, 134, 141, 202, 282, 302n16  
*Stimmungs-Impressionismus*, 211  
 Storm, Theodor, 201  
 St. Petersburg, 256  
 Strauss, Johann, 142, 156–57, 304n56  
 Strauss, Richard, 120, 145, 151, 164, 171, 182, 184–86, 190, 195, 219, 229, 237, 239–41, 248, 255, 327n55  
*Alpensinfonie*, 241, 327n55  
*Capriccio*, 222  
*Ein Heldenleben*, 55, 162  
*Elektra*, 233, 241, 324n20  
 Lieder, 102, 201  
*Der Rosenkavalier*, 222  
*Salome*, 241  
*Sinfonia Domestica*, 239  
 Stravinsky, Igor, 111, 149, 165, 230, 246–47, 265, 288, 305n72  
 Strindberg, August, 202, 233, 244  
 strophic form, 14, 23, 83, 168, 171  
 Sturm, Peter, 105  
 style, 5, 10, 19, 27–28, 34, 95, 98–107, 110–11, 131, 133–34, 136, 139, 155–56, 158, 169, 187, 198, 202, 204, 206–7, 219, 232, 139, 244–45, 254, 257, 260–61, 265, 268  
 subjectivity, 18, 20, 40, 83, 101, 132, 135, 152, 169, 188, 198, 217, 225, 229, 266–68, 271, 278, 281–82, 287–88, 305n70  
 sublime, 6, 127–28, 130, 134, 167, 197, 248, 273, 277  
 Suppé, Franz von, 156  
 suspension, 5, 57, 65, 113, 114, 208, 212, 215–16, 222–26, 245  
 Swedenborg, Emanuel, 244  
 Swift, Jonathan, 127, 129  
 Symbolism, 229–30, 241  
 symphonic poem (as genre), 10, 107, 164, 172, 185–87, 195, 200–201, 239, 284, 286, 291n32, 294n78, 304n49, 332n5  
 symphony (as genre), 5, 10, 17–26, 49, 53, 54–55, 86, 98, 106–24, 131–32, 134, 151, 154, 160, 164–66, 168, 171, 173–74, 179–82, 184–194, 218, 223–25, 236, 240, 250, 259, 264–65, 270, 277–78, 283–84, 287  
 tableaux, 174, 183, 184, 214, 235, 312n52  
 Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Ilyich, 27, 151, 153, 187, 277  
 temporality, 20, 30, 65, 67, 209, 213, 217–18, 223–27  
 theater, 106, 156, 164, 173–74, 177, 181–82, 185, 192–93, 219, 230, 240, 270, 272, 282, 314n81  
 theatricality, 5, 13, 32, 38, 46, 54, 111, 114, 160, 173–74, 179–84, 192–93, 194, 215, 220, 225, 230, 232, 248, 263–65, 270, 277, 284–85, 287, 313n72  
 Thomson, Philip, 145  
 thresholds, 46, 54–55, 57, 61, 64–65, 67, 69, 85, 113–15, 211, 216, 223–24, 245  
 Tibbe, Monika, 19, 21, 33, 154, 161–62, 167, 168, 222–23, 293n61, 308n125, 309n131, 309n133, 310n20  
 Tieck, Ludwig, 127, 130, 270  
 Todorov, Tzvetan, 165, 217  
 Tolstoy, Leo, 202  
 tone, 4, 6, 17, 19, 37–40, 52, 111, 120, 133, 134–51, 169, 179, 219–20, 222, 232, 246, 258–59, 262–67  
 tragedy, 115, 125, 134, 141, 199–200, 205, 219, 246, 248, 286, 303n42  
 Treitler, Leo, 24–25, 166, 316n107  
 triviality, 146, 249, 260, 304n58  
 turn figure, 52, 69, 84–85, 90, 110, 120, 278–81, 335n51  
 universalism, 5  
 urban voices, 6, 21, 54, 115, 230  
 Vaihinger, Hans, 282, 335n56  
 valediction, 86, 271  
 Van Gogh, Vincent, 37  
 variation form, 56, 189–90, 198, 211, 216, 300n35  
 Verdi, Giuseppe, 230, 277  
*Don Carlos*, 175–76, 313nn59–60  
*Il trovatore*, 177  
*Otello*, 176–77

- Vienna, 100, 106–7, 132, 152, 194, 198, 202,  
204, 228–62, 271, 273, 326n48  
Burtheater, 232  
Conservatoire, 102–3, 173, 251–52, 313n55  
Philharmonic Orchestra, 10  
School, 230–31  
Secession, 23–24, 106, 201, 229, 234–36,  
289n8  
University, 235, 248, 254  
Vill Susanne, 13, 159, 299n21, 308n119, 312n52  
Visconti, Luchino, *Death in Venice*, 335n52  
vocality, 18, 28–31, 33, 87, 189, 268, 278, 289n5,  
291n27, 293n61, 293n63, 293n69  
Volkmann, Robert, 306n78  
*Volkston*, 100–101, 136, 159, 170  
*Volkstümlichkeit*, 20, 103, 115  
vulgarity, 129, 131, 188–89, 248
- Wagner, Otto, 229  
Wagner, Richard, 23–24, 132, 151, 153–54,  
156–57, 173, 182, 192, 200, 202, 212–13,  
229, 242, 264, 272, 278, 301n46, 311n32,  
327n55  
*Beethoven* essay, 23, 53, 190, 212, 235,  
326n39  
*Götterdämmerung*, 13, 48, 190–91, 258  
*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, 118–19,  
133, 193, 212–13, 300n43, 321n99  
*Parsifal*, 70, 133, 214, 274, 285, 297n26  
*Das Rheingold*, 181  
*Siegfried*, 46, 53, 61, 154  
*Tannhäuser*, 306n86  
*Tristan und Isolde*, 74, 84–85, 229, 234,  
297n33, 306n86, 308n119  
Wallascheck, Richard, 254–55  
Walter, Bruno, 52, 196, 200–201, 210,  
268, 319n44  
waltz, 57, 141–42, 147, 156, 216, 230, 246,  
304n56  
Warsaw, 256
- wave forms, 56, 217, 226, 296n24  
Weber, Carl Maria von, 135, 172, 215, 229, 237,  
308nn112–113, 308n115  
*Die Drei Pintos*, 158–59, 172, 311n36  
Weber, Marion von, 135, 172, 201, 303n44,  
318n43, 319n44  
Webern, Anton, 27, 40, 102, 157, 201–2, 230,  
232, 237–39, 241–42, 245, 291n25, 293n58,  
325n35, 327n72, 329n105  
Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 10,  
242–43, 245  
Lectures, 251–52  
Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6, 242, 245  
Vocal works, 245  
Wedekind, Frank, 229  
Weiler, Gershon, 253  
Weill, Kurt, *The Threepenny Opera*, 106  
Weimar, 186, 240, 302n19, 314n88  
Weiner, Marc, 237, 324n10  
Weininger, Otto, 254, 261–62, 331n156  
Wenk, Arthur, 14, 17, 106  
Whaples, Miriam, 159  
Wildhagen, Christian, 181, 313n72  
Williamson, John, 124, 176, 188, 243, 293n67  
Willnauer, Franz, 182, 292n44, 305n73, 311n36  
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 98, 230–31, 233–35, 254  
Witz, 206  
Wolf, Hugo, 100, 132, 172, 201, 229, 271  
words and music, 17–26, 29
- Yates, W. E., 230  
Youens, Susan, 159, 298n10
- Zemlinsky, Alexander, 100, 132, 171, 229, 242,  
266, 271, 303n43, 325n31  
Zohn, Harry, 231–32  
Zuckermandl, Berta, 325nn30–31  
Zweig, Stefan, 254, 257  
Zychowicz, James L., 28, 126, 158, 285–86,  
308n113, 311n36